MONDAY
March 11, 2024

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
16 Pages ₹ 6.00

THE HINDU

www.thehindu.com

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

https://newsth.live/fb
https://newsth.live/x
https://newsth.live/ig

RNI No. KARENG/1970/49945

Vol. 55 • No. 60

Printed at » Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirapalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Tirupati » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

T.N., Karnataka, Kerala discuss issue at meet

KARNATAKA » PAGE 4

NO RESPITE

War rages in Gaza on the eve of Ramzan

WORLD » PAGE 13

PM'S U.P. VISIT

'Development push by BJP rattled Opposition'

NEWS » PAGE 10

DATA POINT

How to solve Bengaluru's water crisis

Wastewater generated is an untapped resource

OPINION » PAGE 9

DOUBLES DELIGHT

Satwik-Chirag pair wins French Open

SPORT » PAGE 15

NEARBY

Hegde stirs controversy

BENGALURU/BELAGAVI
BJP MP Anantkumar Hegde has said that voters should give a two-third mandate in the Lok Sabha to the BJP to enable amendments to the Constitution. » Page 4

'Approval for Mysuru highway works in 15 days'

MYSURU
Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday assured that underpasses and foot overbridges on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway will be cleared in the next 15 days.

» Page 2

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 7

'Differences' with CEC may have led to Goel quitting

The differences with Rajiv Kumar are said to have arisen during a visit to West Bengal earlier this month to oversee election preparations; Opposition raises question over resignation of poll official

Mahesh Langa
AHMEDABAD

The sudden resignation of Election Commissioner (EC) Arun Goel, barely a week before the announcement of the Lok Sabha election, came as a surprise to many, but insiders in the poll body have said that apparent differences emerged between Mr. Goel and Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar during their visit to West Bengal to oversee poll preparations earlier this month.

According to well-placed sources, Mr. Goel refused to attend the press conference in Kolkata to brief the media about the preparations in the State after his reported differences with Mr. Kumar.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar (right) with former Election Commissioner Arun Goel. R. RAVINDRAN

The CEC addressed the media alone on March 5.

In the press briefing, the CEC mentioned that Mr. Goel had returned to Delhi due to "health concerns". However, sources close to Mr. Goel have dismissed that and maintained that "he is in the pink of health".

Instead, they said that "he flew back to Delhi cutting short his visit in West Bengal owing to some serious differences".

However, they did not elaborate what transpired between the two officials nor what issues they differed on that caused Mr. Goel's abrupt exit from the poll body.

Reacting to Mr. Goel's resignation, Opposition parties on Sunday asked whether he had stepped down due to differences with the CEC or to contest an election.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Govt. likely to appoint new ECs by March 15

NEW DELHI
The two vacancies in the Election Commission, created by the resignation of Arun Goel and the retirement of Anup Chandra Pandey, are likely to be filled by March 15, sources said on Sunday. The high-level Selection Committee is likely to meet on March 14. » PAGE 11

India inks free trade agreement with 4 European countries

Landmark pact: The signing ceremony of the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI/PIB

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India signed a free trade agreement (FTA) with four European countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland – on Sunday, with a goal of reaching $100 billion in investments in India and one million jobs within 15 years.

The Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) marks the second such full-fledged FTA signed after India's agreement with the United Arab Emirates, and will see considerable tariff reduction, increase in market access, and simplification of customs procedures.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
'BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT'
» PAGE 10

Trinamool list for all 42 seats in West Bengal is out

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Putting an end to speculation over seat-sharing arrangements with the Congress, the Trinamool Congress on Sunday announced candidates for all 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal. The list has surprises, with the party fielding former cricketers Yusuf Pathan from Berhampore and Kirti Azad from Bardhaman-Durgapur. The party retained veteran MPs Sudip Banerjee from Kolkata, Saugata Roy from Dum Dum Lok, and Kalyan Banerjee from Serampore.

While the party dropped Nushrat Jahan from Basirhat, it has fielded actors Rachana Banerjee from Hooghly and June Maliah from Medinipur.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
DOORS STILL OPEN: CONG.
» PAGE 11

BWSSB set to crack the whip on unauthorised borewells in city

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amidst the worsening water crisis in the city, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has announced action against people who drill unauthorised borewells.

The BWSSB on Sunday issued an order stating that moving forward, in accordance with Section 11 of the Karnataka Ground Water (Regulation and Control of Development and Management) Act, 2011, complaints will be filed against individuals who drill borewells without proper authorisation. It also said that legal action would be pursued against such individuals in accordance with the specified rules and regulations.

Public borewells will be accorded priority, while private borewells will be considered after a site inspection by officials, BWSSB said. FILE PHOTO

The directive comes into effect on March 15, when people can submit applications on the BWSSB website for permission to drill borewells, said Ram Prasath Manohar V., Chairman of BWSSB. He further said that public borewells will be accorded priority. Private borewells will be considered after a site inspection by concerned officials, contingent upon an expert report.

Bengaluru has been reeling from water shortage since last month, even before summer fully set in, following a drought-hit year after the failure of the monsoon. The State government has been making a slew of announcements to tackle the situation, with the action against unauthorised borewells being the latest. Earlier, it had called the prices of water tankers as complaints of unavailability and increasing rates started pouring in from several parts of the city.

RELATED REPORT
» PAGE 2

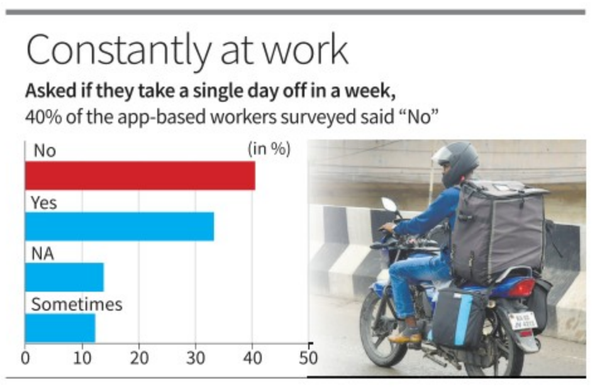
Gig workers suffer from lack of social security, regulations: study

A. M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

Almost a third of app-based cab drivers work for over 14 hours a day, while more than 83% work more than 10 hours and 60% work over 12 hours, according to a study of more than 10,000 Indian cab drivers, gig and platform workers.

It noted that social disparities make the situation worse, with over 60% of the drivers from the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes working for over 14 hours a day, while only 16% from the unreserved category work such long hours.

The study was conducted by the People's Association in Grassroots Action and Movements, and the Indian Federation of App-based Transport Workers, with technical support from the University of Pennsylvania and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung India, a German foundation.

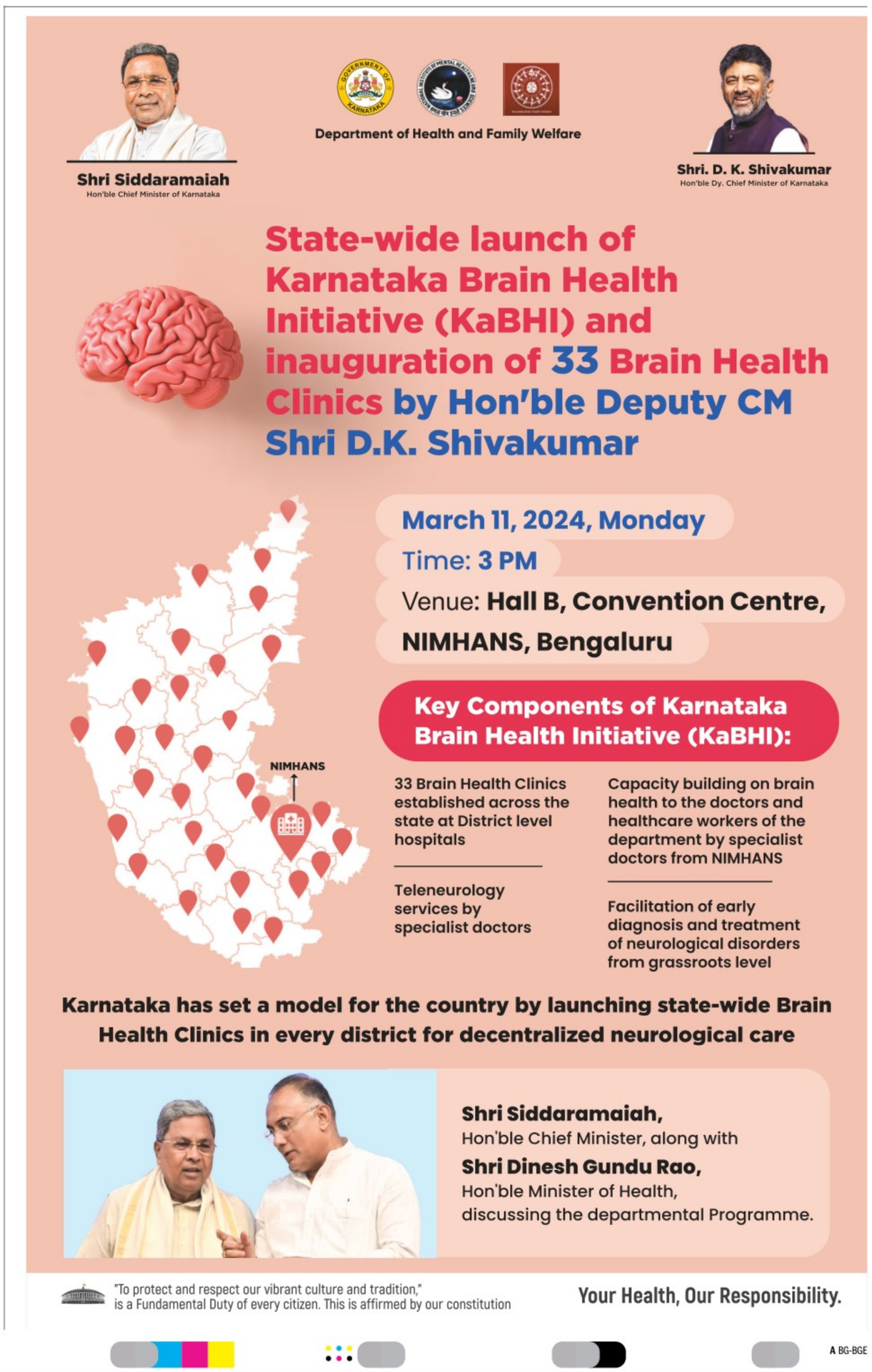


Authors of the study, which will be released on Monday, recommended stronger social security for app-based workers, and called on the government to exercise oversight on the fairness of algorithms and mechanisms used by platforms to monitor such workers. The report said that over 43% of participants in the study earn less than ₹500 a day, or ₹15,000 a month, after deducting all costs. It found that 34% of the app-based delivery persons earn less than ₹10,000 a month, while 78% spend over 10 hours daily at work.

Adding to the problem

Noting the differences among workers from different castes, the report said that "these income disparities further exacerbate the already existing social inequalities and perpetuate cycles of poverty and distress within these communities".

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10


Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka
Department of Health and Family Welfare
Shri. D. K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Dy. Chief Minister of Karnataka
State-wide launch of Karnataka Brain Health Initiative (KaBHI) and inauguration of 33 Brain Health Clinics by Hon'ble Deputy CM Shri D.K. Shivakumar
March 11, 2024, Monday
Time: 3 PM
Venue: Hall B, Convention Centre, NIMHANS, Bengaluru
NIMHANS
Key Components of Karnataka Brain Health Initiative (KaBHI):
33 Brain Health Clinics established across the state at District level hospitals
Teleneurology services by specialist doctors
Capacity building on brain health to the doctors and healthcare workers of the department by specialist doctors from NIMHANS
Facilitation of early diagnosis and treatment of neurological disorders from grassroots level
Karnataka has set a model for the country by launching state-wide Brain Health Clinics in every district for decentralized neurological care
Shri Siddaramaiah,
Hon'ble Chief Minister, along with
Shri Dinesh Gundu Rao,
Hon'ble Minister of Health,
discussing the departmental Programme.
"To protect and respect our vibrant culture and tradition," is a Fundamental Duty of every citizen. This is affirmed by our constitution
Your Health, Our Responsibility.

Don’t go silent into that good night, Harmanpreet

Rage does funny things to sportspeople — it can obliterate but can just as easily lead to performances of the highest quality; Harmanpreet tapped into the latter when she stormed the Kotla with her 48-ball 95 in the Women's Premier League

SPORTZPICS/WPL

Lavanya Lakshminarayanan

Over her 15-year-long (and counting) international career, rage is an emotion that has come to be associated with India captain Harmanpreet Kaur. Remember that unbeaten 171 blitzkrieg against Australia in the 2017 ODI World Cup semifinal in Derby?

When she brought up her century with a tense double, a mix-up with Deepti Sharma almost cost India a wicket. After diving to safety, it was not a century celebration one got to see. Instead, Harmanpreet hurled her helmet away and unleashed an angry tirade on Deepti.

That fire doused quickly enough, towards her partner at least, but she kept the flame fanned to decimate the bowling side, the best team in the world, to finish with an innings that saw 20 fours and seven sixes. That knock was a slap in the face to critics of Indian batting pedigree who for long, and perhaps rightly so, believed power hitting was not an Indian ability.

These embers of aggression surfaced many times over the next few years, more so after the captain’s armband passed on to her. In 2023, during the three-match ODI series against Bangladesh, India drew the final game which Harmanpreet seemed to attribute to umpires favouring the host.

In an incident that brought back memories of a certain Shakib Al Hasan, Harmanpreet smashed the stumps when she was adjudged out on 14, visibly furious with the decision. During the presentation ceremony after, that seething rage came out as heavy-handed sarcasm as she reportedly called the umpires to join her and opponent captain Nigar Sultana Joty for the photo-op. This incident earned her a two-match ban, which led to the batter featuring only in the final of the Asian Games, which India ultimately won.

Australia brings out the aggressive best of Harmanpreet as captain Alyssa Healy would discover during the one-off Test in Wankhede last year. The visitor was gaining ground having erased India’s 187-run first innings lead. Harmanpreet, an intelligent offie, brought herself on and took out Tahlia McGrath in her first over. She then went after Healy, who was looking set to impose herself.

A fuller ball on the stumps was hit back to her. Harmanpreet rocketed the ball back to the striker’s end but Healy was in the way. In an attempt to avert a hit, she deflected the incoming ball which ran down deep third for four, leaving invisible fumes raging behind the India captain.

The duo exchanged words, Harmanpreet claimed field obstruction but this was not validated. She got her wicket though, off the very next delivery. A rattled Healy copped a length ball onto her pads in trying to sweep and up went the umpire’s finger. Three reds in the review, but Harmanpreet’s eyes were a deeper scarlet.

High benchmark

Saturday’s Women’s Premier League fixture between Mumbai Indians and Gujarat Giants gave those watching another glimpse of this shade of Harmanpreet, that vintage angry young Punjaban, ready to pump up her teammates but also give them a mouthful should they be anything less than the best versions of themselves.

Saika Ishaque bore the brunt of Harmanpreet’s wrath early on. With a few misfields and a missed potential run out where she made a mess of the collection, she turned to Harmanpreet who shot expletives her way and then looked away just as quickly, the gravity of the skipper’s ire dawning on her. MI had not been successful in keeping Beth Mooney and Dayalan Hemalatha quiet (the pair stitched a 121-run stand) but had pulled things back enough to deny the Giants the joy of a 200-plus score.

Harmanpreet quietly walked back to the dugout. A few minutes later, Yastika Bhatia and Hayley Matthews made their way out to begin MI’s chase. Harmanpreet was spotted quickly getting what looked like a cupcake down. Ashleigh Gardner’s first delivery snuck past the gap between the stumps and a left-leaning Mooney to run away for four. Seconds later, there’s Harmanpreet pacing about the dugout, padded, gloved and raring to go.

This brought back memories of that bullish knock in England nearly seven years ago.

“A day before I had goosebumps, I felt that something big was coming my way and I had to grab it. That day, I wasn’t hungry or thirsty. I was only waiting for my chance to bat so I could go and express myself,” she once said about the knock.

After a fluent start from Matthews and Yastika, two quick dismissals (of Matthews and Nat Sciver-Brunt) saw Harmanpreet make her way to the crease. Giants slowed down the MI tempo and made Yastika and Harmanpreet work for every single run. The skipper began slowly, working her way into the feel of the pitch and the kind of spaces she could pick out.

By the end of the 14th over, MI needed a difficult 91 runs off 36 balls. The MI dugout had a few worried faces. Jhulan Goswami was seated in the rear row of the dugout, sinking into her seat just a little as the asking rate touched 15 an over.

If you’re a Chronicles of Narnia fan, the wise words of Aslan, the anthropomorphized lion in the series, would perfectly fit that moment in hindsight.

“You doubt your value. Don’t run from who you are,” Aslan told little Lucy. Harmanpreet too decided to pay heed. She tapped into the purest form of that rage and what it could do if directed inwards.

Beast mode

Her wagon wheel is for all to see. From 20 runs off 21 balls until that point, she finished unbeaten with a 48-ball 95. There was an element of luck too. Phoebe Litchfield dropped a sitter, giving Harmanpreet a lifeline when she was on 40. Blood rushed into the cheeks of the young Australian as she realised who she had put down. And boy, would Harmanpreet go on to make her pay.

“Melie (Amelia Kerr) said she (Harmanpreet) had that look in her eye when she was battling with her at the end. She just knew what she needed to do, what she wanted to do, and executed it,” Sciver-Brunt would reveal at the post-match press conference.

Over 10,000 people were there to bear testimony to a knock that paid homage to the Harmanpreet of old. No creative field setting, no on spot field changes, not even the bizarre match interruption when the sprinklers came on could stop her. An eight-minute delay followed with the super sopper getting to work. MI at that stage needed 23 off 12.

“Jhulan (Goswami, MI’s bowling coach) was very annoyed. We were worried it would break the momentum since we just had two to three good overs. Melie told us that Harman was happy to get a break and get going. Even then, she was so focussed,” Sciver-Brunt added.

During the course of the WPL, we’ve seen many instances when Harmanpreet has slammed the bat onto the pitch, chided herself for a loose shot or an opportunity lost. In times like that, it helps to have a partner who readily sets about executing your gameplan.

In a video by the league, Jhulan and Harmanpreet broke down the chase and the latter underlined Kerr’s role in the storm that was to follow.

“The first priority was to rotate the strike to get a feel of the pitch. When Amelia joined me, we were just counting the number of sixes we needed. At that stage, we had 24 balls and needed at least nine sixes from them. Even if we missed one, we had more deliveries to try,” Harmanpreet explained.

Kerr managed a mix of both. She worked on bringing Harmanpreet back on strike, keeping the conversation going in the middle and even breached the fence when she got a chance to, smacking Shabnam Shakil over deep square leg for six.

Giants’ batters had eased apprehensions about the challenge the wicket would pose. Harmanpreet’s mentality handled the rest. As that video concluded, Jhulan said, “We still have a long way to go and for Mumbai Indians to win, we need more innings like this. “I know, I know,” Harman responded softly as she went in to hug Jhulan, well aware of the weight on her shoulders.

“Harman’s different on game day and when it’s not. When we’re training or around the hotel, she’s very relaxed, very involved with the group, very social. Come game day and she’s a lot more focused and probably has just a bit more tunnel vision on what the task is.

“She’s not often flustered about things. If she hasn’t got off to a quick start, we’re on the sidelines saying, “Ooh, could you go strike a bit more…” but as we saw today, she doesn’t need to. I like to voice things when I bat, but she keeps to herself,” Sciver-Brunt revealed.

Harmanpreet is a flawed hero and a private one. You won’t see sides she doesn’t want to show you. You won’t even see her dissect her efforts in fine detail. Much of the brilliance of Harmanpreet Kaur is between her ears and the only expression of it that we are allowed to partake in is when her bat does the talking. Lucky are those who got to be part of that unforgettable conversation at the Kotla.

THE GIST

- Harmanpreet's knock helped MI record the highest chase in WPL's short history
- The 91 runs Mumbai Indians chased down in the last six overs are the most any team has done successfully in the final six overs (15-20) of a women's T20
- Harmanpreet's unbeaten knock overtook Shafali Verma's 84 against Royal Challengers in 2023 as the highest score by an Indian in the WPL

Mysuru highway: Approval for foot overbridges, underpasses in 15 days

The assurance was given by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari at a function organised to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for 22 NH projects

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on Sunday assured that underpasses and foot overbridges will be approved and work on improving entry and exit points on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway will be cleared in the next 15 days.

He was addressing the gathering at a function organised to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for 22 National Highway projects, totalling 268 km with an investment of ₹4,036 crore in Mysuru.

Mr. Gadkari referred to the representations he received from Mysuru MP Pratap Simha and Mandya MP Sumalatha Ambareesh on the infrastructure improvement works on the highway. "I assure you that the approval for the underpass, foot overbridges and entry and exit points will be given in 15 days," he said. Earlier, Mr. Simha said the Centre had sanctioned ₹1,200 crore for underpasses, foot overbridges and improvement of entry and exit points on the highway.

Road to future: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari launching National Highway projects at a function in Mysuru on Sunday. M.A. SRIRAM

Mr. Gadkari also said the government had approved a total of 16 ropeways in Karnataka, which will be built at a total cost of ₹5,000 crore. The projects approved by the Centre include not only Kodachadri Hills, Anjanadri Hills and Madhugiri Hills but also Chamundi Hills in Mysuru.

He also assured that a Detailed Project Report (DPR) will soon be ordered on the six-laning of the 25-km-long highway between Mysuru and Nanjangud. The 115-km highway project connecting Mysuru with Kushalanagar has already been awarded in 5 packages for a total of ₹ 5,200 crore. Pre-construction activity has already started with respect to four packages.

Once complete, the highway will bring down the journey time between Kushalnagar to Bengaluru from the existing 5 hours to just 2 and a half hours. He said the road will also provide an alternative route between Bengaluru and Mangaluru whenever there is a landslide in Shiradi ghats. Mr. Gadkari was also optimistic that the work on the Bengaluru-Chennai express highway would be completed before January 2025. He said the 262 km-long Bengaluru-Chennai express highway, which is being constructed at a cost of ₹20,000 crore, will reduce the journey time between the two cities to just two hours when completed.

Similarly, the authorities were trying to complete the 282 km-long ring road in Bengaluru, which had been undertaken at a cost of ₹17,000 crore, by December this year. During the last ten years, the total length of national highways in State has increased from 6,707 km to 8,200 km. While 151 projects envisaging 3,063 km have already been completed, about 94 projects covering 2,372 km have been undertaken at a cost of ₹ 90,000 crore.

INBRIEF

Man arrested for murdering alcoholic son in a fit of rage

The Basaveshwaranagar police on Saturday arrested a 55-year-old churmuri vendor for allegedly killing his alcoholic son in a fit of rage and trying to make it look like a suicide.

The accused Prakash, a resident of Basaveshwaranagar, was upset with his only son Yogesh being an alcoholic. The duo would have frequent fights over the issue.

On March 6, the duo fought after Prakash warned him not to come home drunk. In the melee, Prakash strangled him to death and later made it look like Yogesh ended his life, said the police. The police shifted the body for postmortem after registering a case of unnatural death. The postmortem report revealed that the death was due to strangulation. A detailed question led Prakash to confess to the crime.

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated March 11, we have a story on a talk by archaeologists Sharada Srinivasan and K. Paddayya. They spoke on the contributions of scientist and historian D.D. Kosambi at an event at the National Centre for Biological Sciences.

Board exam begins today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Summative Assessment-2 (Board Exam) for classes 5, 8, and 9 will be held from March 11 to 18 across the State. A total of 28.14 lakh students from 69,137 government, aided, and unaided schools of State curriculum will write the examination.

The Karnataka State Examination and Assessment Board is conducting the examination and the board will supply the answer sheets for all the students free of cost.

Rowdy arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Kengeri police have arrested a rowdy and his five associates who had taken up a contract from a businessman to allegedly kill an RTI activist on February 29. The accused has been identified as Krishna, 30, a rowdy-sheeter.

The accused allegedly confronted the victim, Nagaraj K., near the railway underpass in Kengeri and attacked him with lethal weapons before fleeing the spot. Kengeri police registered a case of attempt to murder.

'Police Run' event

Participants running in front of Vidhana Soudha after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah flagged off the 'Police Run' event to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Karnataka State Police Department in Bengaluru on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Water discharged from KRS is for Bengaluru, not T.N., say dam authorities

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The Irrigation Department and KRS Modernisation and Medium Irrigation Project Circle at Mandya have refuted reports that Karnataka was releasing water from KRS to Tamil Nadu even as Bengaluru was reeling under a severe water crisis.

The authorities said in a release that 4,780 cusecs was discharged from KRS on Saturday to replenish the Shiva Balancing Reservoir at Malavalli from where water is pumped to Bengaluru. The water level at the Shiva Balancing Reservoir had depleted by 36 inches and was affecting supply to Bengaluru following which the BWSSB officials visited the KRS and pleaded for releasing additional water from the dam, said the authorities.

Consequently, 4,780 cusecs was discharged and it was reduced to 2,769 cusecs on Sunday at 10 a.m. consequent to the improvement in the water level at Malavalli balancing reservoir. The water discharge from the KRS was further reduced to 1,008 cusecs as the levels and the exercise was an effort to ameliorate the water situation in Bengaluru, the authorities added.

Incidentally, the BJP had taken to social media to flay the State Government on the issue, which has now been refuted by the authorities.

Water woes: How is the Garden City maintaining its parks and gardens?

Jahnavi T. R.
BENGALURU

At a time when access to water has become Bengaluru's biggest issue, how are the authorities looking after the parks and gardens of the Garden City, keeping these spaces green.

The two premium lung spaces in the city – Lalbagh and Cubbon Park – are maintained by the Horticulture Department. The two green spaces get 15 lakh litres of treated water every day for the maintenance of trees and plants. The borewells within the gardens provide water for the potted plants.

"The water levels have gone down in the borewells. There are some dry patches here and there in Lalbagh and Cubbon Park. Although we are not greatly affected, maintenance during the summer season is difficult," said M. Jagadeesh, Joint Director (Parks and gardens), Horticulture Department.

Stressing that there is no alternative for rainwater, he said, "Irrespective of how many times we water the plants, because of the heat, the wetness in the soil immediately dries up. This has caused some withering. This concern can only be addressed by rains."

The water levels have gone down in the borewells. There are some dry patches here and there in Lalbagh and Cubbon Park. FILE PHOTO

BBMP maintains a total of 1,270 parks which are spread across eight zones. Every locality has at least one BBMP park. Most of these parks have their own borewells. Due to recent weather conditions, some of these borewells have run dry. "So far, we have not had big problems when it comes to park maintenance. In the parks where the borewells are dry, we are planning to get tankers and use Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) water or biologically treated wastewater. Out of all the parks we maintain, there are water problems in around 100 - 200 of them as of now," said Chandrashekar, Deputy Director (Horticulture), BBMP.

For the maintenance of one park, BBMP would require about two water tankers for three days.

While parks and gardens have their own borewells, golf courses in the city often rely on external sources, mostly treated water for maintenance. These courses sprawled across acres need lakhs of litres of water everyday. The two major golf clubs - Bangalore Golf Club and Karnataka Golf Association - are grappling with water shortage. Bangalore Golf Club needs around seven lakh litres of water every day whereas it is getting only two and a half to three lakh litres as of now.

"Water is a major requirement for golf courses to maintain the fairways and greens.We mostly use treated water, but sometimes buy tankers too. However now, because of the demand and increased prices we are not able to procure tankers. For now, we are not able to do much for our fairways, but we are taking care of greens. Every summer, we face water shortage but this time, it is acute," said D.N. Vasanth Kumar, captain, Bangalore Golf Club.

The fate of IPL

The city is also scheduled to host three IPL matches later this month and in early April – on March 25, 29 and April 2. But, for the upkeep of the turf, water from the STP unit within the premises of the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium is used. But, there is precedent for the shifting of matches, for in 2016, the Bombay High Court had ordered close to a dozen games – including the final – be moved out of Maharashtra owing to severe drought.

Theme-based rail coach restaurants to be launched by March-end at rly. stations

These restaurants are coming up at KSR Railway Station in Majestic and SMVT. SWR has already set up a theme-based rail coach restaurant at Sri Siddharoodha Swami Railway Station in Hubballi

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The much-awaited Rail Coach restaurants at Bengaluru railway stations are scheduled to become operational by the end of March, according to railway officials.

The theme-based rail coach restaurants are coming up at the Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station in Majestic and at Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminal in Baiyappanahalli (SMVT).

A South Western Railways(SWR) official said, "The June 2023 e-auction for restaurants garnered significant interest from bidders. M/s Haldirams secured the operation of the KSR station restaurant, while Gaurav Enterprises took charge at SMVT. The contract spans five years."

Selected bidders will be assigned an empty coach to transform into a theme-based restaurant. FILE PHOTO

SWR has already set up a theme-based rail coach restaurant at Sri Siddharoodha Swami Railway Station in Hubballi. The rail coach restaurant is named 'Bogie Bogie'.

"Similar to the one in Hubballi, the rail coach restaurant will be using a railway coach, which will be modified to suit the tastes of connoisseurs of food," the official said.

AC and non-AC seating

The earlier deadline to start the theme-based rail coach restaurants was October 2023. According to officials, the rail coach restaurants will be positioned near the main entrance of railway stations and feature air-conditioned dining spaces. Additionally, non-air-conditioned seating arrangements will be available outside the dining area. The refurbished railway coach will be adorned with paintings, warm lighting, and comfortable seats.

For now, the SWR has planned to start only one such restaurant in each station. According to the plan, selected bidders will be assigned an empty coach to transform into a theme-based restaurant, operating 24/7. SWR aims to cater to the preferences of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian eaters by incorporating separate kitchens for each. The restaurants will offer a diverse menu featuring both North and South Indian delicacies, providing seating for 50 people inside the coach restaurant and additional outdoor seating, the official explained.

Walkers' association stages protest

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Cubbon Park Walkers' Association staged a protest demonstration in front of Central Library inside the park against the construction of a proposed 10-storey annex building inside the park.

Umesh K., president of the association, said they had "reliably learned" that the Horticulture Department is planning to provide land inside the park for the building.

He further said this is the last lung space remaining in the Central Business District (CBD) and the construction will leave the park suffering. The protest highlighted the need for protecting the park from such activities.

Green enthusiasts, pet lovers, and the Cubbon Park Walkers' Association (CPWA) protest near Central Library, with pet dogs against the proposed construction of a 10-storey building inside Cubbon Park. K. MURALI KUMAR

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, MAR. 11		
RISE	06:29	SET 18:30
RISE	07:09	SET 19:36
TUESDAY, MAR. 12		
RISE	06:29	SET 18:30
RISE	07:54	SET 20:34
WEDNESDAY, MAR. 13		
RISE	06:28	SET 18:30
RISE	08:38	SET 21:33

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	34	23
Mysuru	36	20
Bengaluru	35	21

Bengaluru Today
35°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be slight cool with mist and haze. Day will be very warm with uneasy afternoon.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be very warm and uneasy. Night will be pleasant.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2024
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

GOVERNOR`S SECRETARIAT
JHARKHAND, RANCHI-834008
Tel - 0651 - 2283465, 2283467, 2283466, Fax - 0651 – 2284870
E-mail – jhrgov@jhr.nic.in, www.rajbhavanjharkhand.nic.in

ADVERTISEMENT

Inviting online application for the post of Vice Chancellor, Sido Kanhu Murmu University, Dumka.

The office of Chancellor invites online application from interested eligible candidates having scholarly pursuit, academic interest, administrative ability and other desired qualifications for the post of :-

1. Vice Chancellor, Sido Kanhu Murmu University, Dumka.

All the instructions and link regarding submission of online application are available on website having URL www.rajbhavanjharkhand.nic.in or, Chancellor Portal (www.jharkhanduniversities.nic.in).

PR 322038 (Governor) 23-24 (D)

Governor Secretariat

Published by Nirmala Lakshman at No 19&21, Bhagwan Mahaveer Road, Bengaluru-560001 and Printed by C. Sridhar at Plot No. 13-D, Bommasandra-Jigani Link Road, KIADB Industrial Area, Bommasandra, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru-560099 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act).
ISSN 0971 - 751X

Scientists genetically modify 'sexual' fruit fly to reproduce asexually

The findings have implications to approaches to control insect pests by releasing large numbers of males sterilised by irradiation or males bearing genomes edited to derail progeny development, and thus reduce progeny numbers

D.P. Kasbekar

The fruit fly (*Drosophila melanogaster*) has been among the favourite organisms of genetics researchers for more than a hundred years. Many years of intense research with these diminutive creatures have led to many breakthroughs in our understanding of biology and evolution.

Recently, researchers from Cambridge University and the California Institute of Technology reported yet another such breakthrough. They were able to 'engineer' a sexually reproducing fruit-fly species to reproduce asexually, demonstrating the profound biological consequences of relatively minor genetic manipulation. The first study that reported this significant feat was published in July 2023; a follow-up study to it was published in the February 2024 issue of *Heredity*.

The fruit fly has been among the favourite organisms of genetics researchers for more than a hundred years. MACROGIANTS (CC BY-SA 4.0)

The *Drosophila* family

How was an organism that usually reproduces sexually turned into one that could reproduce asexually?

Fatherless reproduction is known as parthenogenesis.

Earlier, other researchers had collected fruit-fly-like specimens from diverse geographies and compared them in different ways with the canonical specimen and with each other, to gauge the extent of their natural diversity. The collection represented more than 1,600 *Drosophila* species.

Of these, one species, *Drosophila mangebeirai*, was found to consist only of females. The eggs produced by isolated females developed directly into female progeny without having to be fertilised by sperm from a male.

Many species (about 76%) that ordinarily reproduce sexually were found to also hatch a small fraction of eggs laid by isolated virgin females into larvae, a smaller fraction of which went on to develop into adults. The name for such species - i.e. which are arbitrarily parthenogenetic a small fraction of the time - is facultatively parthenogenetic. One of them was *Drosophila mercatorum*.

The canonical species used in research, *Drosophila melanogaster*, is however strictly sexual.

The genes for parthenogenesis

The researchers set themselves two goals. First, to identify the genes that allow unfertilised *Drosophila mercatorum* eggs to complete parthenogenetic development. Second, to modify the *Drosophila melanogaster* genome to express the corresponding genes in a way that would trigger parthenogenesis.

RNA sequencing is a technique that can quantitatively estimate the level to which a gene is expressed. Using this technique, the researchers identified 44 genes in *D. mercatorum* eggs that were expressed differently when they were parthenogenetic versus when they weren't.

The DNA is a ladder-like molecule. Its two rails, or strands, are made of a long series of alternating units of phosphate molecules and the sugar deoxyribose molecules. Each sugar unit is attached to one of the four chemical bases: adenine (A), cytosine (C), guanine (G), and thymine (T). The As and Cs on one strand link with the Ts and Gs on the other to form the rungs, or base-pairs, that hold the strands together.

The *Drosophila melanogaster* genome has 200,000,000 base-pairs distributed across four DNA molecules. Each molecule is the core of a chromosome. The four chromosomes together make up the genome. In all, this genome encodes about 13,600 genes.

On the other hand, the RNA molecule is comb-like. Its spine (strand) is made of alternating units of phosphate and sugar ribose molecules. Each sugar unit is attached to one of the four bases: A, C, G, and uridine (U), which make up the comb's tines.

A gene is a segment of a few thousand base-pairs of the DNA molecule. The sequence of bases on one of its strands tells every cell the sequence of amino acids it needs to string together to make a protein. To do this, the cell copies the sequence of As, Ts, Cs, and Gs in the DNA's protein-coding strand to a sequence of Us, As, Gs, and Cs, respectively, to form the RNA. The RNA is then sent to structures called ribosomes, which assemble the encoded protein.

> Many species that ordinarily reproduce sexually were found to also hatch a small fraction of eggs laid by isolated virgin females into larvae, a smaller fraction of which went on to develop into adults

Engineering asexual reproduction

The 44 genes whose expression differed between eggs of parthenogenetic and sexually-reproducing *D. mercatorum* strains had counterparts in the *D. melanogaster* genome. The researchers over- or under-expressed the counterparts to the levels in the *D. mercatorum* parthenogenetic eggs.

In particular, they found that if the genome of a *D. melanogaster* specimen was modified to have two extra copies of the *polo* gene, an extra copy of the *Myc* gene, and a lower expression of the *Desat2* gene, 1.4% of the specimen's eggs were parthenogenetic and whose offspring survived to adulthood.

The researchers also found that these parthenogenetically produced adult flies could also mate with male flies and produce progeny. So a strictly sexually reproducing fly was made facultatively parthenogenetic.

The polar bodies

A fly receives two sets of chromosomes, one from each parent. It transmits only one chromosome of each pair to its egg or sperm. Say a sperm has fertilised an egg. This egg will now have five sets of the genome: one in the egg's nucleus (maternal pronucleus), another in the nucleus from the sperm (paternal pronucleus), and three more nuclei called polar bodies that are sequestered in the egg's periphery.

The polar bodies are a by-product of the mechanism by which the fly transmits only one chromosome of each pair to the egg nucleus. Normally, the male and female pronuclei fuse to form the progeny nucleus, and the polar bodies are lost. If an egg is unfertilised, however, it lacks the male pronucleus and the female pronucleus is unable to initiate embryonic development on its own.

Altering the protein levels of *polo*, *Myc* and *Desat2* likely rendered polar-body sequestration and disposal inefficient. This makes one or more polar bodies available to substitute for the missing male pronucleus and start embryonic development.

These findings have implications to approaches to control insect pests by releasing large numbers of males sterilised by irradiation or males bearing genomes edited to derail progeny development, and thus reduce progeny numbers. Unwittingly, this approach will also select for facultatively parthenogenetic individuals, thus limiting its long-term effectiveness.

(D.P. Kasbekar is a retired scientist.)

THE GIST

Fatherless reproduction is known as parthenogenesis. One species of fruit fly, *Drosophila mangebeirai*, was found to consist only of females. The eggs produced by isolated females developed directly into female progeny without having to be fertilised by sperm from a male

Researchers found that if the genome of a *D. melanogaster* specimen was modified to have two extra copies of the *polo* gene, an extra copy of the *Myc* gene, and a lower expression of the *Desat2* gene, 1.4% of the specimen's eggs were parthenogenetic and whose offspring survived to adulthood

Researchers also found that parthenogenetically produced adult flies could also mate with male flies and produce progeny. So a strictly sexually reproducing fly was made facultatively parthenogenetic

BIG SHOT

The French League for Birds has estimated that more than 500 common guillemots – seabirds related to penguins and puffins – have been found dead along the French Atlantic coast since the year began. Guillemot beachings happen regularly in winter but not to the scale of the past weeks. Scientists say the birds likely died from exhaustion due to difficult conditions at sea. REUTERS

WHAT IS IT?

Connectome: the map of the brain

Arkatapa Basu

Just like the saying 'many drops make an ocean', billions of neurons make up the human brain, which keeps us alive and kicking. These neurons interact with each other, and these connections allow us to perform complex activities and synthesise complicated ideas. Scientists have made sense of the way this neural network functions using the concept of the connectome.

The connectome is a comprehensive map of connections – or synapses – between neurons in the brain, sort of like a cartogram for the electrical and chemical signals the neurons send and receive. A neuron's dendrites receive chemical signals and convert them into electrical information, which is then sent through the axon, the neuron's tail. At the end, based on the electrical inputs, the cell releases new chemicals into synapses, relaying the message to the next neuron.

Mapping the connectome allows scientists to understand brain function and how attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or Alzheimer's disease affect it. By charting the cellular links, they gain insights into cognitive processes – and the disorders that arise when the processes go awry – with which they can identify potential new drugs to treat such conditions.

The connectome is a comprehensive map of connections between neurons in the brain. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Despite challenges posed by the brain's complexity and the vast amount of data it processes, the connectome has simplified scientists' understanding of the brain and paved the way for a clearer picture of our neurological health.

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to
science@thehindu.co.in
with the subject 'Daily page'

Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Govt. of Karnataka

Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Legal Metrology Department

Foundation stone Laying programme for

"Aahara Soudha"

by

Sri Siddaramaiah, Hon'ble Chief Minister

Date: 11 March, 2024, Monday at **11.00 AM**

Venue: No.1, Ali Asker Road, P.B. No. 175, Bengaluru-560052

August Presence

Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Govt. of Karnataka

Sri K.H. Muniyappa
Hon'ble Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Legal Metrology
Govt. of Karnataka

Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Govt. of Karnataka

Salient Features

- Construction in an area of **30000 Sq. ft.**
- Being constructed at a cost of **Rs.49.50 Crore**
- Construction of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Office complex and Laboratory related to Legal Metrology Department
- Mega Building consisting of four floors
- Two floored adequate Car Parking

Sri K.H. Muniyappa,
Hon'ble Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Legal Metrology & Bengaluru Rural District In-charge Minister participating in a function.

DELIVERED AS PROMISED...

FREE BUS Service for women across Karnataka

Gruha Jyothi — Up to 200 Units of Free Electricity to each home

Anna Bhagya — 10kg Free Food Grains (per person / per month)

Gruha Lakshmi — ₹2000 per month to female head of the family

Yuva Nidhi — ₹3000 Per month for Graduates | ₹1500 Per month for Diploma Holders

As enshrined in our Constitution - to safeguard public property and to abjure violence is the fundamental duty of every citizen of India.

mahindra Rise

TAUFIQ QURESHI'S SURYA

FEATURING
SARANG KULKARNI, ABHAY NAYAMPALLY
KAUSHIKI JOGLEKAR, SHIKHAR NAAD

VIKKU VINAYAKRAM'S GHATAM SYMPHONY

FEATURING
V.SELVAGANESH
V.UMASHANKAR
SWAMINATHAN SELVAGANESH

MAHINDRA PERCUSSION FESTIVAL

In Association With
THE HINDU

MARCH 23-24, 2024

PRESTIGE SRIHARI KHODAY CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ART
25, MUDALAPPA ST, ANJANADRI LAYOUT, KONANAKUNTE, BENGALURU

CHARU HARIHARAN QUARTET

FEATURING
KOZHIKODE NANTHALAKOOTTAM & THE KATTUNAYKKAR (JENUKURUBA)

RHYTHMS OF INDIA

FEATURING
BC MANJUNATH, DARSHAN DOSHI
VARIJASHREE VENUGOPAL,
PRAVEEN RAO

SWARATHMA

PERCUSSIVE EXPERIENCE

FEATURING
THAVIL RAJA & BEAT GURUS

ASHTANAYIKA KAL AUR AAJ

FEATURING SHIVANGINI YEASHU, KRANTINAARI, PRATIKA, VIVEICK RAJAGOPALAN, VAIBHAV WAVIKAR, BHARATH KUMAR, AISHWARYA MEENAKSHI, SWARANGI SAVDEKAR, YAMINI KHAMKAR

TWO SUMM

FEATURING
VIVEICK RAJAGOPALAN &
ANANTHA KRISHNAN

Tickets on bookmyshow
Co-Sponsor mahindra FINANCE
Co-Sponsor Paul John
Co-Sponsor Carlsberg SMOOTH
Promoted and Produced by hyperlink

A BG-BGE

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The worth of Indian equities bought by FPIs in March

6,139 in ₹ crore. Foreign Portfolio Investors are turning steady buyers so far this month, driven by market resilience, economic growth and decline in U.S. bond yields. PTI

Combined market valuation of seven of top-10 valued firms

71,301 in ₹ crore. The market valuation of seven of the top-10 valued firms climbed in the holiday-shortened last week, with Airtel emerging as the lead gainer. PTI

The share of India's population requiring assistive technologies

18 in percentage. India's growing need for Assistive Technologies (ATs) to cope with disabilities and chronic illnesses was highlighted by Dr R. K. Srivastava, former director general of health services at the Health Ministry. PTI

Number of cases settled in first National Lok Adalat of 2024

1.13 in crore. The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) successfully organised the first National Lok Adalat of 2024 in the taluks, districts and high courts of 34 States and Union Territories. PTI

Number of children kidnapped in Nigeria's school abduction

15 Armed men raided a boarding school in northwestern Nigeria, kidnapping sleeping children just 48 hours after another incident where nearly 300 students were taken hostage. AP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Follow us facebook.com/thehindu twitter.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

Introducing a new toll collection system

How will the recently proposed highway tolling system work? Will it be based on the U.S.'s Global Positioning System? Will it be mandatory for all vehicles to fit an on-board unit device? What about the FASTags collection system?

EXPLAINER

Jagriti Chandra

The story so far:

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said in Parliament in February that the government plans to implement a new highway toll collection system based on the global navigation satellite system before the model code of conduct for the 2024 election kicks in.

What is the new proposed highway tolling system?

The global navigation satellite system is a term used to refer to any satellite-based navigation system, including the United States' Global Positioning System (GPS). It uses a large constellation of satellites to provide more accurate location and navigation information to users globally as compared to the GPS alone.

An official of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways explained that its implementation will involve an On-Board Unit (OBU), or a tracking device, fitted inside a vehicle whose location can be mapped using GAGAN, the Indian satellite navigation system with an approximate accuracy of 10 metres. The co-ordinates of the entire length of the country's national highways will have to be logged with the help of digital image processing, and software will be used to assign the toll rate on a particular highway, calculate the toll amount for a vehicle as per the distance travelled by it and then deduct it from a wallet linked to the OBU. The system will additionally have gantries, or arches mounted with CCTV cameras, at various points on a highway for enforcement purposes. These will capture an image of the vehicle's high security registration plate and cross verify if a road user is trying to trick the system by either removing the tracking device or travelling without an OBU onboard.

The Ministry official further explained that the aim of the technology is to provide users the benefit of paying toll only for the actual distance travelled on a highway, or pay-as-you-use. The government also hopes that it will eventually allow barrier-free movement.

A complete overhaul: Toll collection on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway in 2023. FILE PHOTO

What are some of the challenges?

One of the major challenges posed by this technology is that of recovering the toll amount if a road user fails to clear his payment after completing a journey on a highway, for instance, if the digital wallet linked with the OBU is empty.

Because there are no barriers involved that can stop a non-compliant vehicle, there are other issues such as when a vehicle travels on a highway without an OBU device linked or the OBU device is deliberately switched off to avoid payment or if a car's OBU is installed on a truck to pay less toll. Gantry-mounted Automatic Number-Plate Recognition (ANPR)-based systems for capturing violations have to be set up on highways across India. However, no such infrastructure exists in the country today.

Further, the success of an ANPR system depends on the quality of the licence plates, which are currently limited to a few cities and States. The government will also have to amend the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules in order to provide for the recovery of unpaid toll, define offences as well as require the necessity of an OBU in vehicles.

How does it safeguard privacy?

In response to a question on how the government plans to safeguard privacy of vehicle users, the Ministry official said that firstly, it had decided to use the GAGAN satellite system and not GPS, which is owned by the U.S., to ensure data security within the country. The official added that although the concept was still a work in progress, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 passed in Parliament last year will address privacy concerns. The law had received flak from civil society for the widening of exemptions granted to government agencies that may facilitate increased state surveillance.

Will FASTags be discontinued?

The new tolling system will co-exist with the FASTag-based toll collection as the government has not yet taken a decision on whether OBUs will be made mandatory for all vehicles or only for new vehicles. Minister Gadkari has been speaking about implementing satellite-based toll collection since 2020, even though radio frequency identification based FASTags for toll collection was rolled out from 2016 and made mandatory only from February 16, 2021. Over the years a robust compliance has been achieved. By December 2023, 98.9% of vehicles passing through toll fee plazas at national highways were FASTag compliant. Toll collection increased 1.5 times from ₹17,942 crore in 2016-2017 to ₹27,744 crore in 2020-2021 at National Highway fee plazas due to a multitude of factors, which included rising number of vehicles as well as revision in tolls and adoption of FASTags. However, officials say that the global navigation satellite system involves lower operational cost as compared to FASTags due to absence of toll plazas and less number of entities in the toll collection process.

THE GIST

- Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said in Parliament last week that the government plans to implement a new highway toll collection system based on the global navigation satellite system.
- Its implementation will involve an On-Board Unit (OBU), or a tracking device, fitted inside a vehicle whose location can be mapped using GAGAN, the Indian satellite navigation system with an approximate accuracy of 10 metres.
- The new tolling system will co-exist with the FASTag-based toll collection as the government has not yet taken a decision on whether OBUs will be made mandatory for all vehicles or only for new vehicles.

Why did the EU impose a €1.8 billion fine on Apple?

What was Spotify's complaint against the company? How did Apple violate anti-trust provisions?

Nabeel Ahmed

The story so far:

On March 5, the European Commission imposed its first anti-trust penalty against Apple for unfairly favouring Apple Music over its rivals. The €1.8 billion ($1.95 billion) anti-trust fine concludes the commission's nearly four-year long investigation following a complaint from Spotify accusing the company of purposely not disclosing to customers alternative options to pay for their streaming music subscriptions.

What did the commission find?

The EU's anti-trust regulator found that Apple unfairly favoured its own music streaming service by banning rivals like Spotify from telling users, and failing to include links, about cheaper subscription options available outside of the App Store. Apple charges up to 30% commission on purchases made through its App Store. It won't receive this fee if the user makes the payment directly on the app's website. The regulator noted that Apple muzzled music streaming apps from informing iOS users about alternative and cheaper music subscription services available on their websites.

What is the significance of the fine?

While having a dominant market position is not illegal in the EU, the penalty in this case highlights the bloc's seriousness in handling corporations that abuse their dominant market positions. This is also one of the biggest fines levied against a major tech company in the EU. Further, under the provisions of the EU's anti-trust laws, the fine exposes Apple against companies affected by anti-competitive behaviour. This means that anyone affected by Apple's anti-competitive behaviour in this case may bring the matter before the courts of the EU states and seek damages. This decision comes at a time when Apple is overhauling its app marketplace to comply with Europe's Digital Markets Act (DMA) to allow third-party apps on iOS devices.

Which law did Apple violate?

The regulator concluded that Apple's anti-steering provisions, that include Apple not allowing app developers to steer users towards alternative payment options, amounted to "unfair trading" conditions, in breach of provisions under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The regulator found Apple to have violated Article 102 of the TFEU and Article 54 of the European Economic Area Agreement that prohibit the abuse of a dominant position. The fine comes months after the EU implemented the DMA to put an end to unfair practices by tech companies that act as "gatekeepers" in the online space. Apple will now be barred from applying anti-steering provisions on any iOS apps under the bloc's competition reforms, as it has been designated a gatekeeper. Companies in the EU risk fines of up to 10% of their global turnover for anti-trust violations. In the event of repeated violations, the fine can be extended up to 20%. In a sharp response to the fine, Apple released a statement in which it attacked the EU, claiming enforcers failed to uncover "any credible evidence of consumer harm, and ignored the realities of the market that is thriving, competitive, and growing fast." Apple further said that there was "no evidence of anti-competitive behaviour", and that the investigations did not yield a viable theory explaining how it thwarted competition in a thriving market. The iPhone maker said that though it respects the Commission's decision, the facts do not support it [the ruling], and as such Apple will be appealing the decision.

Which other companies are facing anti-trust investigations?

In December last year, Apple offered to let rivals access its tap-and-go mobile payments system used for mobile wallets in a bid to settle EU anti-trust charges. The investigation charged Apple with curbing rival's access to its tap-and-go technology, Near-Field Communication (NFC), making it difficult for them to develop rival services on Apple devices. A long-running investigation into Google found that the company gave its own shopping recommendations an illegal advantage over rivals in search results. In December 2022, the European Commission informed Meta that they believe the company has breached EU anti-trust rules by distorting competition in the market for online classified ads.

THE GIST

- On March 5, the European Commission imposed its first anti-trust penalty against Apple for unfairly favouring Apple Music over its rivals.
- The regulator concluded that Apple's anti-steering provisions, that include Apple not allowing app developers to steer users towards alternative payment options, amounted to "unfair trading" conditions, in breach of provisions under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.
- A long-running investigation into Google found that the company gave its own shopping recommendations an illegal advantage over rivals in search results.

Hegde stirs another controversy by seeking two-third majority for BJP to amend Constitution

In 2017 too, the MP had spoken about amending the Constitution only to apologise later by stating that his comments had been distorted; saffron party distances itself from his statement

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU/BELAGAVI

Courting another controversy and embarrassing the BJP weeks ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the saffron party's Member of Parliament from Uttara Kannada Anantkumar Hegde has said that voters should give a two-third mandate in the Lok Sabha to the BJP to enable amendments to the Constitution. The BJP, however, distanced itself from his statement.

"The BJP needs a two-thirds majority in both the Houses of Parliament to amend the Constitution and set right distortions and unnecessary additions made to it by the Congress," he said, addressing a gathering in Karwar on Saturday and explaining the numbers required to amend the preamble of the Constitution. The party would also need to come to power in more than 20 States for this, he said.

Anantkumar Hegde

"If the Constitution has to be amended - the Congress fundamentally distorted the Constitution by forcefully filling unnecessary things in it, especially by bringing in laws that were aimed at suppressing the Hindu society - if all of this has to be changed it is not possible with this (current) majority," he said.

This is the second instance that the former Union Minister has waded into a controversy over amending the Constitution. In 2017, he had spoken about amending the Constitution only to later apologise by stating that his comments had been distorted.

BJP on X

While the Congress criticised the MP's statements, the BJP Karnataka unit took to social media platform X to distance itself from Mr. Hegde's statement.

"Mr. Hegde's remarks on the Constitution are his personal views and do not reflect the party's stance. The BJP reaffirms our unwavering commitment to uphold the nation's constitution and will ask for an explanation from Mr. Hegde regarding his comments," the party said.

"Mr. Modi said 'Ab ki baar 400 paar' (This time it will be above 400 seats). Why above 400? ... We have two-thirds majority in Lok Sabha, (but) in Rajya Sabha we don't have two-thirds majority. We have a small majority. In States, we don't have an adequate majority," Mr. Hegde said.

He said: "If we win more than 400 Lok Sabha seats, we can win the Assembly seats. Because of this more than 20 States will come to us, and we will have two-thirds majority among the State governments. With two-thirds majority in Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and among State governments -- once this happens -- then see how things will be," he said.

Citing the example of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, he said that it was passed in the Lok Sabha and later in the Rajya Sabha "with effort". But several State governments did not approve it, and hence it could not be implemented, he pointed out. "Now the government plans to implement it (CAA) through an amendment. If not, the law and order will go out of hands and anti-nationals will have a free run," he said, without explaining who the "anti-nationals" are.

Disqualify Hegde, says CM

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that Anantkumar Hegde, MP, should be disqualified from contesting elections permanently. "If Prime Minister Narendra Modi does not approve of his statement, Mr. Hegde should be expelled from the party. The MP's statement is not a personal one but a hidden agenda of the BJP. Without the approval of the party seniors, he cannot make such statements."

Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K Shivakumar said this showed that the BJP is anti-Constitution.

Human-wildlife conflict: Three southern States resolve to share intelligence, coordinate joint operations

The Hindu Bureau
BANDIPUR

The inter-State Coordination Committee comprising Forest Departments of Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu resolved to mitigate human-wildlife conflict through collaborative action and intelligence sharing.

At a meeting conducted in Bandipur Tiger Reserve of Chamarajanagar district on Sunday, Forest Minister of Karnataka Eshwar B. Khandre and his counterpart from Kerala A.K. Saseendran signed a charter specifying action plan for conservation and mitigating conflict situations, foster collaboration in intelligence sharing, exchange resources to benefit from mutual strength and expertise etc. The charter ''embodies a shared vision beyond administrative boundaries aiming to create a legacy of responsible conservation for harmonious coexistence of humans and wildlife''.

Forest Minister Eshwar B. Khandre and his Kerala counterpart A.K. Saseendran releasing the inter-State Coordination Committee Charter in Bandipur on Sunday.

The meeting was a fallout of a slew of human-animal conflicts reported in the region and the triggering point was the death of a person in Wayanad in Kerala trampled by an elephant which was radio collared in Karnataka.

Though two inter-State coordinating meetings - one of senior officials and another of field staffs - had been conducted in February this year, this was the first ministerial level meeting involving Forest Ministers of Karnataka and Kerala while senior Forest Department officials had represented Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Khandre called for critical need for collaboration among the three south Indian States given their conservation initiatives and rich biodiversity. He also highlighted the challenges arising from the increase in wildlife populations and the resultant conflict with humans and underlined the importance of working together, especially in the inter-State border areas.

The meeting adopted a landscape approach with focus on the entire Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve covering Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Calling for standard operating procedures for managing human-animal conflicts, the meeting also took note of the challenges arising from the proliferation of invasive weeds like lantana.

In cases that entailed jurisdictional issues, it was decided to have coordinated joint operations comprising the forest, police and excise departments of the States concerned and along the inter-State borders so as to promote a unified approach to address human-wildlife conflict.

With respect to population estimation exercise, the charter has resolved to conduct synchronised population estimation in protected areas to provide valuable insights into population dynamics which is expected to help develop conflict mitigation strategies.

An advisory board comprising wildlife conservation experts will also be constituted to provide insights to enhance conflict mitigation strategies and there will be periodic review of the activities proposed in the charter.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

CM attacks Deve Gowda over truck with BJP

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Stating that Janata Dal (Secular) supremo H.D. Deve Gowda had followed dual policy with respect to the BJP, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday attacked the former over his recent praise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party's alliance with the BJP.

Reminding Mr. Deve Gowda about his earlier statement that he would leave the country if Mr. Modi becomes Prime Minister, Mr. Siddaramaiah said: "It is quite surprising to me that Mr. Gowda has now joined the BJP and has been praising him. Mr. Gowda had said that he would wish to be born as a Muslim in his next birth and would be against the BJP always."

The Chief Minister was speaking at a felicitation function of Congress MLC Puttanna, who won his fifth election from Bengaluru Teachers' Constituency.

He said: "Now, the former Prime Minister has tied-up with the BJP to save his party. People of the State are mature enough to understand his stance."

On taxes

Mr. Siddaramaiah also said that it was foolish on the part of BJP to think that it would win the elections in the name of Mr. Modi. He said that the BJP is confident of winning in the name of Mr. Modi and they have no other agenda to face the people. "The BJP thinks that it will win all the 28 seats in the State. For ₹4.30 lakh crore collected as tax from Karnataka in 2023-24, the State has received only ₹50,257 crore. This is gross injustice. How can Karnataka witness development?," he said.

'Adjustment' politics

Before the official list of candidates was announced by the BJP, Cooperation Minister K.N. Rajanna took everyone by surprise by announcing that Congress's S.P. Muddahanume Gowda will lock horns with former Minister V. Somanna from the saffron party in Tumakuru Lok Sabha constituency.

Many Congress leaders in Tumakuru constituency were disappointed with Mr. Rajanna's "announcement." Though it is rumoured that Mr. Somanna will get BJP ticket, the party is yet to officially announce its candidate. However, Congress leaders now began talking about "adjustment politics" in Tumakuru and alleged Mr. Rajanna's role in it. Mr. Rajanna, who stoked a controversy by demanding appointment of four Deputy Chief Ministers in the Siddaramaiah government, has reportedly convinced Home Minister G. Parameshwara and succeeded in giving ticket to Mr. Muddahanume Gowda, who recently quit the BJP and joined the Congress. With dissidence brewing in Tumakuru constituency, Randeep Singh Surjewala, AICC general secretary in-charge of Karnataka, summoned some party leaders to Delhi in a move to douse the discontent.

Campaign against Shobha, Hegde

A few people, said to be workers of the BJP, launched a campaign opposing the party's ticket to Union Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje from Udupi-Chikkamagaluru Lok Sabha seat this time. It is not clear who ran that campaign. Some people within the party suspected that it could be the handiwork of other ticket aspirants.

Ms. Karandlaje, reacting to the statement, said she had been doing the job assigned to her with honesty, and the party's senior leaders would respond to such campaigns against her. Former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa stood by her. He not only hinted that she would get the ticket, but also added that she would win with a higher margin this time than the previous election.

Similarly, in the Congress camp, there are reports that former MP K. Jayaprakash Hegde, who worked as chairperson of the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, will join the Congress and get a chance to contest from the Udupi-Chikkamagaluru seat. Earlier, he contested for the seat and won. Later, he joined the BJP. Now, a group of Congress workers has launched a campaign on social media platforms against Mr. Hegde. They have urged the party not to give ticket to someone who would join the party only to seek ticket.

Nagesh Prabhu
Sathish G.T.

VISAKHAPATNAM INDUSTRIAL WATER SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
Tender Notice
Tender Notice No.02/2023-2024/DIR(T)/SGM/GM(VIWSCO)/DB-III/10-03-2024
Number of works: 1, Value of works – 987.77 Lakhs (2nd Call)
Downloading starting Dt.10-03-2024-, Tender Closing Date 13- 03-2024
Note : Further details at http://www.tender.apeprocurement.gov.in
O/o GM(VIWSCO) Cell No. 99663 33342
GM(VIWSCO) SGM(VIWSCO) DIRECTOR(T)

पंडित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय शेखावाटी विश्वविद्यालय, सीकर
Pandit Deendayal Upadayay Shekhawati University, Sikar
वेबसाईट: www.shekhauni.ac.in ई-मेल reg.shekhauni@gmail.com
क्रमांक: 22946-47 दिनांक : 10.03.2024
ADVERTISEMENT NO. 03/2024
Vacancies for Non-Teaching Staff (Clerical)
Online application are invited for vacant Non-Teaching posts of Clerical Staff-29 Posts in the University. Online application form, Qualifications and other details will be available on the University Website www.shekhauni.ac.in from 11th March, 2024. Last date for online submission of application forms is 10th April, 2024 till 11:59 PM Midnight.
Registrar

पंडित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय शेखावाटी विश्वविद्यालय, सीकर
Pandit Deendayal Upadayay Shekhawati University, Sikar
वेबसाईट: www.shekhauni.ac.in ई-मेल reg.shekhauni@gmail.com
क्रमांक: 22944-45 दिनांक : 10.03.2024
ADVERTISEMENT NO. 02/2024
Vacancies for Various Non-Teaching Staff (Officers)
Online application are invited for various vacant Non-Teaching posts of Controller of Examination - 01 Post, Deputy Registrar- 01 Post and Assistant Registrar- 02 Posts in the University, Online application form, Qualifications and other details will be available on the University Website www.shekhauni.ac.in from 11th March, 2024. Last date for online submission of application forms is 10th April, 2024 till 11:59 PM Midnight.
Registrar

पंडित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय शेखावाटी विश्वविद्यालय, सीकर
Pandit Deendayal Upadayay Shekhawati University, Sikar
वेबसाईट: www.shekhauni.ac.in ई-मेल reg.shekhauni@gmail.com
क्रमांक: 22942-43 दिनांक : 10.03.2024
ADVERTISEMENT NO. 01/2024
Vacancies for Various Teaching Posts
Online application are invited for various vacant teaching posts of Professor - 05 Posts, Associate Professor-10 Posts, Assistant Professor -15 Posts, Assistant Librarian-01 Post and Assistant Director-Physical Education- 01 Post in the University. Online application form, Qualifications and other details will be available on the University Website www.shekhauni.ac.in from 11th March, 2024. Last date for online submission of application forms is 10th April, 2024 till 11:59 PM Midnight.
Registrar

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
INVITATION FOR TENDER - 4th call
(Only through KPP portal)
BWSSB invites Tenders from eligible contractors for the following works:
Office of the Chief Engineer (Project),
3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G.Road, Bangalore-09

Division	IFT Number	Amount put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last Date & Time for Submission of Tender	Date & Time for Opening of Tender
Central Stores	BWSSB/EE(CStr)/AEE/JE/STR/702/2023-24 Date:06.03.2024	Rs.56,69,262/- / Rs. 1,13,385/-	25.03.2024 before 04:00 pm	27.03.2024 at 12:00 Noon

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. For further details contact the below signed office during working hours.
Sd/-
Executive Engineer (Central Stores)
DIPR/CP/KAVITA/4171/2023-24

CLASSIFIEDS MART
TO ADVERTISE VISIT
www.thehinduads.com
CALL: Bengaluru: 98455 29981 • 080-22071826
Mangaluru: 0824-2417575 • 2417580
Hubballi: 0836-2338600 • 2335700

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, RAKSHITHA NACHAPPA, daughter of K.A. Nachappa Murali, currently at 1174, 12 B Main Road, HAL II stage, Indiranagar, Bengaluru 560 008, do hereby make it known to all concerned that the general power of attorney dated 29th July 2022 bearing registration number GNR–4–0215–2022–23 executed by me constituting my father, Sri. K. A. Nachappa stands cancelled as per Cancellation Deed dated 1st February 2023 bearing registration number GNR–4–00514–2023–24. It is further made known that there isn't any other POA executed by me subsisting authorizing any other person/s to act as my Attorney. The public are requested to exercise caution and may take confirmation before acting upon any POA purported to have been executed by me. My postal address for any correspondence is as given herein. Email id: rakshinachappa@gmail.com Dated at Bengaluru this the 11th day of March 2024. Sd/– Rakshitha Nachappa

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client negotiated to purchase the below mentioned Schedule Property from (1) Sri. **R. SREENIVASA** S/o Ramaiah, having PAN No: CGOPR0524E and Aadhaar No: 839501375979 and (2) **Smt. SHHILPA K.S** W/o R. Sreenivas, having PAN No: GWNPS5394J and Aadhaar No: 805852454848, both are R/o No. 320, 2nd Cross, Near Kidwai Layout, 4th Block, Anjanapura, Bengaluru - 560062 for a valuable Sale Consideration. Aforesaid vendor represented that, they are the joint owner and in physical possession and enjoyment of the below mentioned Schedule Property, same was purchased from their own source and means. And the title, rights and interest over the schedule property was acquired by them through the registered Sale Deed **dated 24/02/2023 vide Doc. No: JPN-1-12116-2022-23,** Stored and Recorded in CD No; JPND 1590 dated 24/02/2023 in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Jayanagar, (J.P Nagar), Bangalore, for a valuable consideration mention therein from one Smt. SOWMYA LALITH KUMAR W/o B. Lalith Kumar having PAN No; ADRPL8294P and Aadhaar No: 348809365740. Thereafter based on the aforesaid sale deed dated 24/02/2023 got registered their name in the katha register maintain by the BDA vide **Katha Certificate dated 01/04/2023** Application No: BD006S230002690, and paid the property tax upto date. At present katha of the schedule property stands in the name of the afore said vendor jointly.

Originally the schedule property was allotted by the BDA under the BDA Act and Rules in favour Smt. SOWMYA LALITH KUMAR W/o B. Lalith Kumar, then R/o Bengaluru and issued site Allotment Letter dated 07/07/2001 vide No. BDA/ADM/DS-2/163/AP/IV/2001-202(02168) in follow up action issued the Possession Certificate dated 19-07-2002 vide No. 04634, thereafter the BDA, represented by its Deputy Secretary had executed the Absolute Sale Deed dated 06/05/2002 vide Document No. 4424/2002-03 dated 19/07/2002 in the office of the Addl. District Registrar, Bengaluru Urban District. Thereafter Khata was issued on 14-07-2004 vide No. BDA/ADM/DS/2145/4/SMV/2004-05 in favour of Smt. SOWMYA LALITH KUMAR W/o B. Lalith Kumar, on receipt of the full sale consideration. Based on the same she got registered her name in the katha register maintained by the BDA vide Katha Certificate No. BDA/RO(S)/AP/163/2002-03 dated 22/04/2003.

Any person/society/firm/company or any other body, having any manner of rights, subsisting rights, title, interest, claims on the below mentioned Schedule Property or any part thereof by way of any agreement of sale, contract, lease, trust, inheritance, gift, possession, lien, charge, mortgage (except the equitable mortgage created in favour of Karnataka Bank Ltd., vide Mortgage Deed/deposit of title dated 24/02/2023 vide Doc. No: JPN-1-12120-2022-23), exchange or by any such deed/instrument of transfer, easement or otherwise, may submit their objection(s), claim(s) in writing with us at the under mentioned address through Registered Post Acknowledgement Due along with the supporting documentary proof, within **FIFTEEN DAYS (15)** from the date of this public notice. Any objections received thereafter will not be binding on my client and my client will proceed to complete the sale transaction.

SCHEDULE

All that the piece and parcel of the Residential Property bearing **Site No. 163, and PID No. 3217070095 assigned by BDA**, same is formed and allotted by BDA under the scheme of the BDA Act and its Rules, situated at Anjanapura Layout, 4th Block, Bengaluru, measuring **East to West: 12 Meters and North to South: 9 Meters,** totally measuring 108 Sq. Mtrs, and bounded on:

East by : Road, West by : Private Property, North by : Site No. 164, South by : Site No. 162.

M. VEERABHADRAIAH , Advocate
10th Floor, Tower Block, Unity Building, Mission Road, Bangalore - 560002.
Mob: 94483 88949
E-Mail: ijoorrmgm@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

THIRUPATHUR | 06-02-2024
IN THE COURT OF THE SUBORDINATE JUDGE, THIRUPATHUR, THIRUPATHUR DISTRICT TAMIL NADU
O.S.NO. 44 OF 2023
K.G. RAVICHANDIRAN...PLAINTIFF
VS
BHAGAVAN ALLALLAPPA...DEFENDANT
TO
BHAGAVAN ALLALLAPPA, SON OF MUNIYELLAPPA, PLOT NOS. 12 AND 13, YELLAMMA MUNIYELLAPPA, NILAYA, BHUVANESHWARI NAGAR, ATTIBELE, ANEKAL TALUK, BANGALURU DISTRICT, KARNATAKA STATE, 562107.
In the above number suit that the plaintiff has filed the suit for recovery of borrowed amount against you. It is posted on 15-03-2024. You have to appear on that date through Advocate or directly party in person at 10 O'Clock Morning in the Court. Failing which exparte order will be passed against you.
Yours faithfully
T.K. SUNDARAVADIVEL, B.A., LL.B.
T.S. VICNESHWARAN, B.A., LL.B., (HONS),
ADVOCATES,
NO. 15, NORTH AGRAHARAM STREET, THIRUPATHUR, THIRUPATHUR DISTRICT, 635, 601, CELL NO. 6380643424

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE LX ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH-61)
O.S No. 2476/2023
Between :
ICICI Bank Ltd.,
having its registered office at : Landmark, Race-Course Circle, Vadodara- 390007, having its head office at and Zonal office at: 4/10, My three Tower, Bommanahalli, Hosur Main Road, Bengaluru-560068 And also having branch at MG Road, Bengaluru, through its Authorised representative
Mr. Rohith Ali M ...Plaintiff
And :
Mr. Boopathy ...Defendant
SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION UNDER ORDER V RULE 20 OF CPC
Defendant :
Mr. Boopathy
S/o. Baskar
Aged about 33 Years,
R/at No.101, 1st Floor,
Sri. Venkateseswara Nilayam,
Cambridge Garden, 3rd Cross Kohehalli Main
Near Landmark: Diya Academy. K.P. Puram,
Bengaluru- 560036.
Whereas the plaintiff above named has instituted the above suit for recovery of money for sum of **Rs. 9,78,334.07/-** along with interest at the rate of 15% P.A. against you, and you are summoned to appear before the LX Addl. City Civil & Sessions Judge at Bengaluru (C.C.H.-61), in person or by a pleader, on the day of 02/04/2024 at 11:00 AM to answer the claim, failing to which the suit would be disposed of Ex-Parte.
Given under my hand and seal of the court on this the 28th day of February, 2024 at Bangalore.
By order of the Court,
Assistant Registrar,
Hon'ble City Civil Court,
Bengaluru
Advocate for Plaintiff
B.S. Jeevan Kumar
Vidhii Partners,
Advocates
No. 701, Queens Corner 'A', 3, Queens Road,
Bengaluru-01.

READ FRONTLINE
LEADING THE DEBATE SINCE 1984
EVERY FORTNIGHT.
TO SUBSCRIBE, VISIT
www.thehindugroup.in/subscribe

CACHE

REUTERS

What are the factors pushing Bitcoin to a new all-time high?

What was behind the crypto asset's sudden surge in price? What does the new all-time high price mean for the sector? Will Bitcoin's price keep rising? What is meant by Bitcoin halving? And is it a good idea to invest in cryptocurrencies?

Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

On March 5, Bitcoin, the largest cryptocurrency by market capitalisation, broke its previous price record to hit a new all-time high of $69,170.63, according to the CoinMarketCap live tracker. The last high was $68,789.63, which Bitcoin achieved in November 2021. After this event in 2021, the coin crashed to multi-year lows and the crypto market was battered by company collapses and regulatory hits.

What are the factors behind Bitcoin's rise in price?

Multiple factors could have contributed to Bitcoin's price gains this year.

The market is recovering from the shock of Russia's invasion of Ukraine that started in 2022, as well as the collapse of cryptocurrencies LUNA/UST and the subsequent fall of trading platforms such as FTX that same year.

In addition to a market recovery, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), known for taking strong legal action against crypto companies, approved the first spot exchange traded funds (ETFs) for Bitcoin. This move told cautious investors as well as financial institutions that the regulatory landscape was perhaps beginning to open up, and it encouraged more traditional investors to explore the world of blockchain-based assets. According to CoinShares' Digital Asset Fund Flows weekly report released on Monday, Bitcoin alone saw $1.73 billion in inflows. The total inflows came to $1.84 billion across digital asset investment products in general, showing just how dominant Bitcoin is.

Furthermore, Bitcoin investors and traders are preparing for the Bitcoin halving event predicted for this April. Many investors and analysts believe this engineered scarcity mechanism will help drive up the price of the cryptocurrency. This sense of expectation and hype usually encourages investors to buy more Bitcoin, and can help push prices up.

What is the Bitcoin halving?

The Bitcoin halving takes place about every four years and sees the crypto mining reward cut in half. While this may sound like a loss rather than a cause for price rises, there is more to the process.

Bitcoin miners use advanced computer equipment and enter an energy-intensive race in order to digitally "mine" their coins. This means they get some Bitcoin as a reward for helping the blockchain grow by processing other users' transactions. While the mining reward is currently 6.25 BTC, this will be halved around April so that fewer coins are introduced into the crypto economy.

Bitcoin has a maximum supply of 21 million BTC, and more than 19 million coins are already in circulation. The halving tightens this process so that the coins will continue to be released at slower and slower rates, likely extending into the next century as well.

The Bitcoin halving is meant to automatically keep the asset scarce, based on mathematics principles. This is unlike paper money, which can be printed on the basis of human decisions.

What should new crypto investors know?

The dangers of volatility cannot be stressed enough.

New investors who are buying Bitcoin or other blockchain-based assets must know just how quickly they can lose their hard-earned money.

For instance, Bitcoin hit a daily high of $69,170.63 on March 5, while the 24-hour low was $59,323.91 – roughly a $10,000 difference. This means looking away from your device for even just a few minutes can drastically change your fortune. When Bitcoin reaches new high prices, many speculators usually sell their assets to exit the market with what they have, or they buy the assets at a profit again after prices fall.

What is the market like for the second largest cryptocurrency?

Bitcoin's market cap is more than $1 trillion this week, making it the leading crypto. Second in line is Ethereum, with a currency called Ether (or ETH for short). However, Ethereum's market cap was less than $500 billion this week.

While Bitcoin's origin and founder (or founders) are largely a mystery, Ethereum has a relatively more corporate structure, though developers worldwide are free to participate in its ecosystem that is known for enabling self-executing commands called smart contracts. People can also establish their own crypto tokens using Ethereum's underlying infrastructure, or build other blockchain services.

Ether used to be digitally mined like Bitcoin, but the platform has switched to the less energy-hungry 'proof-of-stake' model as it continues to grow.

Ether prices tend to echo those of Bitcoin, so ETH also enjoyed a lift this week as Bitcoin hit its all-time high. Ether crossed the $3,900 threshold, but it is yet to beat its all-time high price of $4,891.70 from November 16, 2021, as per CoinMarketCap.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Last week, the cricketing world witnessed four players appearing in their 100th Test on successive days. A quiz about players who have played 100 or more Test matches

Soorya Prakash. N

QUESTION 1
Who was the first ever player to appear in 100 Test matches?

QUESTION 2
Who is the only player to have played his entire career consecutively without missing any Tests?

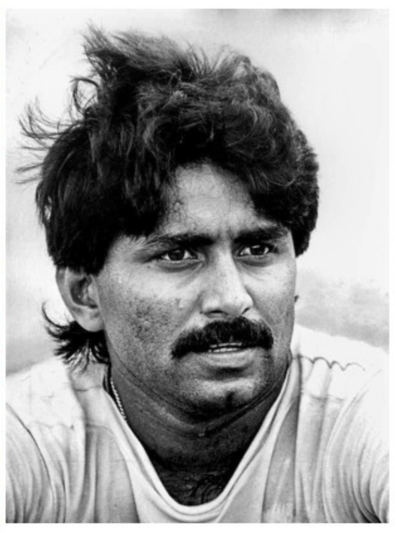
QUESTION 3
Who is the only player to have led his country in more than 100 Test matches?

QUESTION 4
Who is the only player to have scored a century in each innings in his 100th Test?

QUESTION 5
Who are the two players to have scored a double century in their 100th Test?

QUESTION 6
Among the 80 players to have played 100 Test matches, there is an interesting connection between Kapil Dev and Sachin Tendulkar and Shane Warne and Graeme Smith. What is it?

QUESTION 7
These two players played not only their first and 100th Test matches against the same opponent but also at the same ground. Name them.



Visual question:
These two players have achieved something unique in their batting record. Identify the players and the feat. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Questions and Answers to the March 8 edition of the daily quiz: 1. This political leader is a two-time Chief Minister and was the face of her party in this north India State. **Ans: Vasundhara Raje**

2. The first woman Prime Minister of the first self-governing country in the world to grant women the right to vote came to power in this year. **Ans: Jenny Shipley; 1997**

3. In 2022, Francia Márquez became the first person of the African-Colombian community to become the Vice-President of this country. **Ans: Colombia**

4. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was the first female President of Ghana. True or False. **Ans: False, she was the head of Liberia**

5. The current Prime Minister and the leader of the largest Opposition party are both women in this country. **Ans: Italy**

Visual: Identify this leader. **Ans: Sucheta Kripalani, Uttar Pradesh**

Early Birds: Raju A.Gopal| Prashant Nain| Jagrati Shukla| Rajmohan. V| Animesh Mohan

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

His ingenious idea helped the company

I found myself in a pickle because I could not solve the problem even though I said I could

S. Upendran

What is the meaning and origin of 'in a pickle'? (C. Narayanan, Chennai)

This is an idiom which is not heard often nowadays. When you say you are in a pickle, what you are suggesting is that you are in big trouble; as there is no immediate solution to the problem, you will continue to be in the unpleasant or sticky situation for some time to come. Other variants of the expression are 'be in a right pickle' and 'be in a pretty pickle'.

I was in a pickle when the university decided to stop funding my project.

Several explanations have been put forward regarding the origin of the idiom. The following is one of them. As Indians, when we hear the word pickle, what comes to mind immediately is the fruit we use to make them – mango, lime, tomato, etc. In the past, for most Europeans, it was a vegetable – primarily, the cucumber. What is of interest to note is that it is neither the fruit nor the vegetable that the word 'pickle' refers to. According to scholars, the Dutch word 'pekel', from which we get our modern 'pickle', referred to the brine or the salty solution in which the vegetable/fruit was immersed for a considerable period of time. In most cases, the brine consisted of vinegar, salt, sugar, and water, and it was this which helped preserve the vegetable and give it a sour taste. So, when you say you are in a pickle, what you are suggesting is, like the vegetable, you are floating around in a bottle of brine –not a very pleasant place to be!

What is the difference between 'ingenious' and 'ingenuous? (Prakash Chaudhary, Jodhpur)

The second syllable in 'ingenious' rhymes with 'bean', 'dean' and 'seen'; while in the case of 'ingenuous', it rhymes with 'pen', 'ten' and 'hen'. The words are pronounced 'in-JEAN-i-es' and 'in-JEN-yu-es' respectively; both words have the stress on the second syllable.

'Ingenious' comes from the Latin 'ingeniosus' meaning 'clever, gifted with genius'; it is mostly used nowadays to describe someone who comes up with clever ideas and is capable of inventing things. This creative talent that the individual has is inborn. The word can be used with things as well. For example, when you talk about someone's ingenious plan, what you are suggesting is that the plan is brilliant.

Shoba is ingenious when it comes to finding reasons to postpone things.

The word 'ingenuous' comes from the Latin 'ingenuus' meaning 'frank, candid'. An 'ingenuous' individual is a trusting person; he speaks his mind, and never attempts to hide anything. Being childlike in his approach to life, he is incapable of deceit. The word carries with it the sense that the person is rather naïve.

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Assuage:
cause to be more favourably inclined; gain the good will of; satisfy (thirst); provide physical relief, as from pain

Synonyms: conciliate, pacify, placate, appease, quench, allay, relieve, alleviate

Usage: *I couldn't do anything to assuage his grief.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/assuagepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /əˈsweɪʤ/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

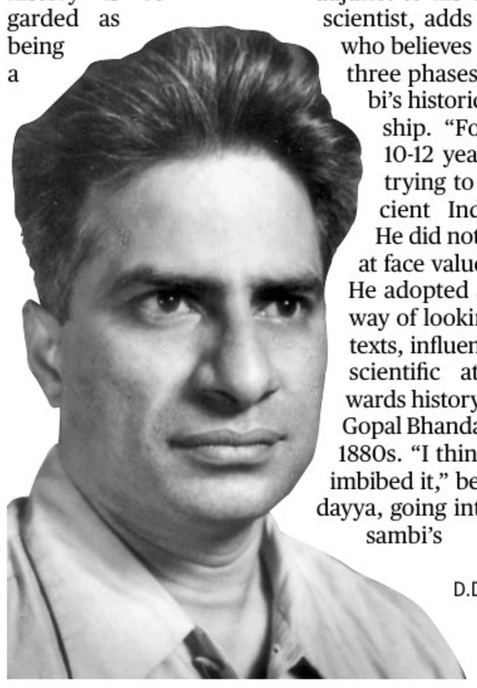
Bengaluru pays tribute to Kosambi, pioneering historian, public intellectual and scientist

Sharada Srinivasan and K. Paddayya spoke on the contributions of scientist and historian D.D. Kosambi to our understanding of Indian pre-history, and thereby, our present times as well

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

Professor K. Paddayya discusses a book written by British archaeologist and army officer Mortimer Wheeler titled *Early India and Pakistan to Ashoka*. Two chapters of the book dedicated to prehistory were called "Stones" and "More Stones." "This is how prehistory was viewed in Indian archaeology till the 1960s, and to some extent, even now," says the archaeologist and Emeritus Professor of Archaeology at Deccan College, Pune, at a recent talk titled *Scientific Study of History and Society,* part of a day-long conference held at the National Centre for Biological Sciences focusing on the life, ideas and perspectives of the noted scholar, scientist and historian D.D. Kosambi.

Paddayya, who shared the forum with archaeologist Sharada Srinivasan, professor in archaeology and history at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru, offers more insights into the study of prehistory. "Prehistory is regarded as being a very dull subject dealing with the collection of stones... classifying and describing them... giving good photographs," he says. Kosambi, however, had a very different take on prehistory, as pointed out by Paddayya. "He saw it as being filled with people."


D.D. Kosambi.

In a session moderated by Nandita Chaturvedi, Paddayya and Srinivasan offered several intriguing insights into ancient civilisations and societies, ranging from Kosambi's work and how it has shaped their own, the importance of prehistory in contemporary times, ideas around living history, and more.

Pioneering work

Paddayya refers to Kosambi as a "great public intellectual" and a "great scientist" who, part-way in his career, also began investigating the history of the country, coming up with "real nuggets" of knowledge. "For these things he is very much remembered even now, though he passed away nearly 60 years ago," says Paddayya.

The most important thing is that his work on the country's history was adjunct to his career as a scientist, adds Paddayya, who believes there were three phases in Kosambi's historical scholarship. "For the first 10-12 years, he was trying to relook ancient Indian texts. He did not take them at face value," he says. He adopted a scientific way of looking at these texts, influenced by the scientific attitude towards history started by Gopal Bhandarkar in the 1880s. "I think he really imbibed it," believes Paddayya, going into how Kosambi's historical scholarship vastly differed from the prevailing ones of his time. "He was looking for an approach which would allow him to capture the people of the past, a professional approach towards Indian history," he says. He also dispells the tendency to dub Kosambi singularly a man of Marxist Indian historical scholarship.

Medieval bronze statuary
Nataraja bronze, Chennai Museum
Chola Nataraja, the Hindu God Siva as Lord of Dance, Madras Museum, c. 1040 AD.. Ananda Coomaraswamy (1912) described the image as 'poetry, and nonetheless, science' Prof Sharada Srinivasan's analysis by spectrochemical methods showed it to be of bronze of 8% tin and 8% lead
Icon casting Thanjavur district
Wax model of icon invested with clay to form mould which is melted out and metal poured into hollow to get shape of the mould
Sharada Srinivasan
Archeologist Sharada Srinivasan speaking on the life and work of scientist and historian D.D. Kosambi. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"That was true only upto a point," says Paddayya, adding that while he *was a* Marxist, he did not like the "extravaganza" of Marxism. "In other words, he was a cobra without fangs. This is important (to note) when we judge him as a Marxist," he adds.

He delves into the specifics of Kosambi's pioneering work, referring to his books such as *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History* and *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline* as classics with a very secure place in Indian historical scholarship. "He is recognised for his processes, approach rather than a chronological descriptive approach," says Paddayya, who believes that in adopting this approach he came down heavily on other interpretations (of history). "Nit-picking is there in his writing, and it is this nit-picking that makes him unpopular."

Other ideas

Paddayya and Srinivasan also elaborate on Kosambi's influence on today's scholarship. "Kosambi pointed to the importance of statistics in looking at the large assemblages before making conclusions about artefacts in a particular context. And that is important in today's analysis," believes Srinivasan. In her illustrated talk, she discusses several things, including the similarities between the material culture of certain communities today and ancient ones, details of the Adichanallur archaeological site, some insights into India's legendary wootz or steel and the continued relevance of spirulina, a food source for the Aztecs and other Mesoamericans, "all that point to long-standing connections and notions of living prehistory that Kosambi was talking about."

Paddayya and Srinivasan also elaborated on Kosambi's influence on today's scholarship

Paddayya, on the other hand, goes into some of the myths about prehistory that Kosambi busted. For instance, the idea of prehistory having a "golden age", something both ancient Indian texts and some American anthropologists have talked about, where everything was said to be available in plenty. Bringing up the anthropologist Marshall Sahlin's idea of an "original affluent society", he states that while Kosambi looked at all these ideas, he didn't wholly subscribe to it. "He said that yes, there was some progress in prehistoric times, but this progress was partial and slow," says Paddayya.

Prehistory, believed Kosambi, was a story of triumphs, critical periods and failures. "He got this idea of man being a tool maker, a unique property of man... that we are able to create artificial extensions to our limbs, whether they are stone tools or atoms," he says, adding that while this enabled man to make some progress and able to adjust better to the environment, it was an arduous process.

Not just big sites

Some of the other ideas Kosambi disputed, according to Paddayya, included the following: that prehistoric Indians were primarily cave-dwellers, that prehistoric man was a mighty hunter and that it was enough to understand all of history through a few big sites like say, Mohenjodaro and Harappa. "The Indian archaeological record is very rich; it consists of sites of various sizes," he says, pointing out that limiting it to simply the large ones is a rather limited way of understanding history, akin to understanding an entire people through only its prime minister or president "What is important is that these sites did not exist in vaccuum. They were all supported by a variety of sites spread all around," he says, also delving briefly into how Indian society is intrinsically linked to its tribal cultures. "Kosambi was the first to say in a formal way that you cannot understand Indian society and the fabric of India's culture unless you understand the contribution made by the tribal component," he says, adding that the whole course of Indian history is incorporation of tribal elements into the mainstream. "In modern times, we think of society in a very homogeneous way. But society and culture we have are composite items," he says.

Why prehistory

"Why should we study prehistory?" asks Chaturvedi, a question on which both panelists have strong views. Srinivasan, for instance, talks about how, in a country like India, the past continues to be a part of a lived experience. "There are a lot of living traditions," she says, adding that even in this modern age, with Artificial Intelligence and so on, there is much to learn and discover from the early steps of humankind. "There is a lot of value in understanding how cognitive understanding and creativity and so many things (came into being). You can't divorce all of that and carry on as if we are now in a different world, " says Srinivasan, who believes that engaging in the past is enriching for our own development.

Paddayya opines that we don't talk enough about *why* we need to study the past at all, in the first place. "I think this is a topic which is not entertained at all in academic circles. In India, we have so many universities; every university has a history departments with many of these departments having archeology attachments," he says. Also, many universities have philosophy and religion departments, he adds. "But, unfortunately, I have not come across even one occasion where a seminar or conference was held to deal with the topic of why we study the past at all," he says.

He firmly believes that asking this question is very important in our times "when all across the world there is a phenomenon of ethnonationalism." It is here that we really need to understand why we need the past at all, he says, adding that the prehistoric past is one phase where there are no tags attached, religious, ethnic or cultural. "It is a study of a formative phase of the human story, and it tells us that everywhere in the world, people were eking out their own ways of life, in tune with the ecosystems in which they were raised."

In other words, this is the anthropological concept of adaptation, where people worldwide adapt to their own environment to arrive at their ways of life. According to Paddayya, understanding this principle about adaptation is liable to make us cautious about rating cultures as high, low, inferior or superior. "You develop a spirit of tolerance in a positive way where you appreciate other ways of life," he says, arguing that this is one of the most important learnings from the study of the prehistory.

IIIT-Bangalore to host RISE

International Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIIT-B) is set to host a two-day conclave aimed at fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and collaboration within academia and the industry.

The RISE (Research, Innovation, Society and Entrepreneurship) Conclave on March 22 and 23, 2024, promises to be a dynamic gathering of thought leaders, industry experts, and academia enthusiasts.

According to a press release, the first day of the conclave scheduled for March 22, will feature the one-day summit with a theme on 'Sustaining and Scaling up Innovation & Entrepreneurship in Academia'.

Prof. Debabrata Das, Director of IIIT-Bangalore, said, "The RISE event serves as a central hub for academia to address the challenges and opportunities in cultivating research, innovation and entrepreneurship."

"We aim to inspire and equip academic institutions to become a core system of innovation and entrepreneurship."

The conference will kick off with an inaugural session featuring Prof. Srinath Srinivasa, Dean (R&D) at IIIT-Bangalore. Keynote addresses by industry stalwarts, including Mr. Chandran Krishnan, Founder, MD & CEO of Campus Angels, and Mr. Uday Prabhu, Chief Innovation Officer at Bosch Global Software Technologies Pvt. Ltd. will initiate the rhythm for the day's discussions.

Women ecopreneurs showcase innovative green ideas on International Women's Day

The event created a platform for start-ups in the city to showcase green solutions

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

More than 30 women ecopreneurs showcased innovative green ideas and projects during an event titled 'Bridging Gaps to Emerging Solutions' held in Bengaluru on March 8 at Bangalore Creative Circus. The event, organised by the #GreenHustlers initiative in association with Bharat Climate Startup, provided a platform for concepts that can potentially support India's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On International Women's Day, when the theme of Investing in Women: Accelerate Progress takes precedence the world over, such a platform created a conducive environment to women-led businesses and start-ups to have access to opportunities in various ways, said a release.

The platform created a conducive environment for women-led businesses and start-ups to have access to better opportunities. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Potential collaborations

The panel discussion was centred on exploring the synergies between the public sector, private investors, and climate start-ups. It also provided insights into potential collaborations that could accelerate the development and deployment of innovative climate and funding solutions. It also highlighted successful case studies and offered suggestions about how to navigate the funding landscape.

Kalyani Krishna, Manager, Gender Inclusion at Villgro, said, "Incubators can play a role in supporting entrepreneurs. They need to tap into the right kind of incubator based on the stage of their business and the support needed."

Innovative solutions

According to the release, the rapid presentation segment provided innovative solutions via fast-paced presentations and ideas.

The start-ups were challenged to condense their value proposition and vision into a 90-second pitch. The session not only tested the entrepreneurs ability to communicate effectively under pressure but also revealed technically advanced solutions that are all set to enrich India's climate start-up ecosystem.

Sonika Choudhury, Fellow at People + AI., said, "This was a great space to connect and network with like minded folks. The climate and sustainability space is still very nascent. We need a lot of these to happen if sustainability and climate action in business has to take off."

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 11, 1974

Karnataka Housing Board's New Scheme 'Not Popular'

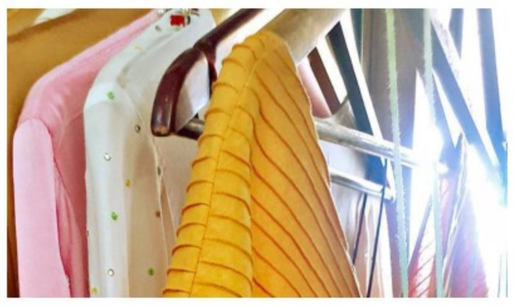
BANGALORE, March 10: The new scheme which replaced the cash loan scheme four or five months ago , and under which the Housing Board itself built houses for allottees, had previously been found to be unworkable and had in fact been abandoned, said Mr. S.A. Agadi, retiring Chairman of the State Housing Board, here to-day. In spite of such earlier experience, an attempt was made at reviving it. It has again proved unpopular.

Under the new scheme, the applicant is required to submit a plan of his building and deposit with the Board 25 per cent of the cost of the house. The house construction is then allotted to contractors. The response is not encouraging.

Karnataka Festival in Delhi

NEW DELHI, March 10: Karnataka is bringing its choicest artists and artisans to the capital for a cultural festival at the Ashoka Hotel from March 13 to 19. Shivaram Karanth and his "Yakshagana." Venkatalakshmi and her Bharatanatya", Doraiswamy Iyengar and his panchaveena and Subbarao and his "Vachanas" and "Padas" will be featured in the performing art section of the "fragrant" Karnataka festival the State government is organising in collaboration with the Indian tourism development Corporation. The festival - fourth in the series "India" our magnificent land is expected to attract foreign tourists because of a special campaign abroad. Mr. S.K. Ghoshal, Special Commissioner, for Karnataka told pressmen here, yesterday.

CITYBEATS



Mindful shopping

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
Serenity presents its range of summer cottons. There will be saris, casual kurtas and dresses. Also on display with this range are their products from the 'recycle reuse range' with jewellery. The boutique is open from 10.30am to 6.30pm
At Serenity, Jayamahal Extention.
Call 41279127.

Summer salads

ON WEEKENDS
The weekend specials series at Justbe by Nidhi Nahata now serves you a high protein salad bowl, which are paired with their range of beverages and wines. The salad is made from organic quinoa, black channa, cucumber, onion, cherry tomatoes, lettuce, olives, tofu and hummus, and a dressing of apple cider vinegar.
Call 95138 04561 to book your table

Vegan finds

MARCH 16, 17
Be a part of Namu Recommends Vegan Market's Spring Edit, which will feature a range of vegan brands such as Flyberry Gourmet, Anuttama Artisanal Chocolates and Jus Amazin with skin and haircare products from Cosmix Wellness.
At Jayamahal Palace Hotel. Call 9148253622.

Art, AI and the lure of immortality

Co-author and artist of *Dream Machine,* Appupen, talked about his latest work during its launch in Bengaluru

Ruth Dhanaraj

Host in the machine Author Appupen (left) with Padmini Ray Murray at the book release of *Dream Machine* in Bengaluru, Laurent Daudet (below). SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

With the subtle infiltration of AI into almost every aspect of our lives, the spectre of Dean Koontz' *Demon Seed* (1973) going from the pages of a novel to becoming our reality, looms disturbingly large.

At the launch of his graphic novel *Dream Machine* (Westland) at Blossom Book House in Bengaluru, author and graphic artist Appupen discussed various facets of the book as well as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its inroads with Padmini Ray Murray, founder of Design Beku, a collective dealing with technology and design.

"I didn't know much about AI at first. I studied it for five months before I began any work," Appupen candidly admits. Appupen who has a background in advertising, co-authored *Dream Machine* with Laurent Daudet, a physics professor and co-founder of a new generation AI startup in France.

The seemingly unlikely collaboration between the two, a graphic artist and a CEO, finds itself in the pages of *Dream Machine*. The plot revolves around the dilemma of the protagonist Hugo, whose AI tech which is soon to be bought by a digital conglomerate, could be misused on so many levels.

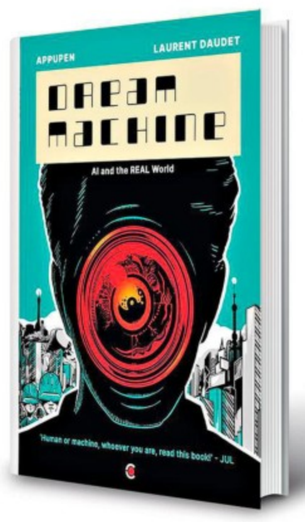
The chance to live forever via one's work in AI seduces people into thinking it is for the greater good. Another character in *Dream Machine,* attempts to convince the protagonist to jump on the AI-money making band wagon because if he didn't, "someone else eventually will."

During the event, Appupen kept pointing out how the powers that be have introduced AI to the public as something fun to be enjoyed. However, their underlying agenda and the many uses it can be put to (both benign and malignant) are yet to be understood.

We are school teachers, farmers, entrepreneurs, techies, scientists – concerned people who want a better future for our kids. The group even includes a few friends of yours, which is why I'm here.
We have been tracking the sudden expansion of REAL.E for about a year now. They're into all sorts of fields – with a plan as massive as their funding.
We know they have reached out to a number of start-ups like yours about a new game.
This is our issue – it's not just a game. Not a game at all.

"AI makes your life more convenient, but the question to ask is 'For whom and at what cost? How badly do we need that convenience?' In the past year, we have become comfortable with AI – toying with tech stuff, such as images and cute avatars. There is a concerted effort to make AI friendly for everybody; a distraction because of which we are not going behind the scenes and seeing all that is possible with it."

Talking about the multi-



various, un-thought of applications for AI, Appupen recalls how when a friend mentioned its use for manual scavenging, a scientist admitted how it was something they had not considered.

"AI is totally focused on the profit end of things. While the popular narrative is to make it more friendly for us, the real stuff is happening underneath, fuelled by businesses and is rather disturbing," he says, warning that deepfakes were just one of the many misuses of this tech.

"What do you think you do better than AI?" asked Padmini, to which Appupen said, "As a comic artist, I don't see AI doing the type of work I do as it's a mix of writing and drawing and how we visualise something. We're always trying to be original in that mix and how we depict them."

Going back to the premise of *Dream Machine* and the idea, "AI only reproduces it doesn't create," Appupen talked about how AI is being trained to imitate certain trends. "If you ask it to write in English or in the style of Victor Hugo, it can do that quite well because it has been trained to. But, if you ask it to write like regional authors, it can't. But it soon will be able to do that too."

Appupen admits *Dream Machine* is quite a departure from his other work as this was a topic that would interest most people and not just readers of graphic novels. "I had to be more careful with language and as it was to be informative and educative, we had to keep it on track."

Dream Machine breaks down the topic of AI as well as its implications, ethics and social impact for laymen, making it easier to understand. Humorous panels depicting the activities of SuperHugo pop up throughout to keep readers from being overwhelmed by the content.

Appupen adds Laurent was "the voice of reason and science" in the making of this novel while he focused on its characteristic of being a comic.

The latter part of the event took questions from the audience and Appupen was asked about the colour scheme in *Dream Machine* which sports an unusual palette, when compared to his usual work.

"It was the tone of green that we discussed quite a bit. While the publishers had a shade of blue in mind, I didn't want it to come across as a cold, corporate colour. I kept pushing yellow into the mix and that was how we ended with different shades of turquoise."

AI's learned or limited knowledge also came up with its real time mix up of the provinces of Punjab in India and Pakistan. The real scenario of AI edging out art, creativity and livelihoods was also discussed.

FILM REVIEWS

Catch us if you can Actors Shivrajkumar and Prabhu Deva in a still from *Karnataka Damanaka*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Conscionable conmen and a social drama

Vivek MV

Yogaraj Bhat, the pioneer of youthful romance in Kannada cinema post-2000s, ditched his pet genre for a social drama in *Dana Kayonu* (2016). Starring Duniya Vijay and Priyamani, the criminally underrated film explored the man-animal bond and globalisation against a village backdrop. With *Karataka Damanaka,* Bhat has made his second full-fledged film on a social theme.

The film revolves around the people of Nandikolu, a village suffering from drought and poor education facilities. It has been 10 years since the village festival, and the locals compare their place to a graveyard.

Elsewhere, a jailer in Bengaluru sends two conmen (Shivarajkumar and Prabhu Deva) to the village to bring his adamant father to the city.

Somehow, the lives of the despondent villagers change for the better thanks to these fraudsters. The two try to win the trust of the people by going out of their way to help them get justice against a corrupt MLA (Rangayana Raghu) and his henchman (Ravi Shankar).

Karataka and Damanaka are the names of the foxes from *The Panchatantra* collection of animal fables, and Shivarajkumar and Prabhu Deva play the cunning human versions of the foxes.

The duo engages in deceptive activities that are hard to believe but strangely funny, which is typical of Bhat's comic sense.

The first half stays focused on its central conflict, and even the three songs do not interrupt the film's rhythm. Rangayana Raghu and Ravi Shanker, often seen playing loud characters, deliver controlled performances despite the lack of depth in their roles.

Thankfully, the female leads (Priya Anand and Nishvika Naidu) are not in the plot without purpose, as Bhat sets up the plot nicely with less chaos and more engaging drama.

Prabhu Deva and Shivarajkumar strike a strong chemistry, but the former truly steals the show.

It took many by surprise when Bhat cast Prabhu Deva for the project, but making his comeback to Kannada cinema after several years, the actor is hilarious as a goofy man with a penchant for generating humour at inappropriate moments.

Meanwhile, the 61-year-old Shivarajkumar goes toe-to-toe with Prabhu Deva's dance moves, and expectedly excels in the emotional scenes.

Bhat has written the screenplay and dialogues based on the story from Vikas, the director's long-time collaborator.

It is a strange coincidence that a film on water conservation is out in theatres when Bengaluru is facing a water crisis!

However, the noble theme notwithstanding, *Karataka Damanaka* does not move you too much. The utterly generic last act is the film's biggest shortcoming. In the last 30 minutes, the jokes dry up, and the story moves ahead in a painfully straightforward manner.

The predictable climax and the preceding long fight sequences rub salt into the wound, and the film shows that even the most creative of directors can struggle to give proper closure to their ideas.

That said, it is encouraging to see Bhat striving to be different, even after two decades in the industry, and *Karataka Damanaka* is a nice little comeback from the director after the forgettable *Garadi* in 2023.

In this day and age, a reasonably good film is akin to walking on thin ice. Will the audience be kind to the filmmaker? Only time will tell.

Karataka Damanaka is currently running in theatres.

Karataka Damanaka (Kannada)
Director: Yogaraj Bhat
Cast: Shivarajkumar, Prabhu Deva, Nishvika Naidu, Priya Anand, Ravi Shankar
Runtime: 156 minutes
Storyline: A jailer sends two conmen to his village to convince and bring his adamant father to the city. The fraudsters, however, have other plans

Much ado about nothing

Vivek MV

Director Guruprasad often identifies himself as a *hathasha prekshaka* (a disappointed or frustrated audience). He describes himself as someone who made films just to overcome the disappointment of watching bad films in Kannada.

However, with *Ranganayaka,* he seems to have forgotten that the audience he is catering to also desires variety in cinema.

Ranganayaka has a superb core idea, perhaps never explored in Kannada cinema. Guruprasad plays himself, a director known for his outspoken nature. Such personalities are a favourite for TRP-hungry television media. One day, he is called for a television show famous for hypnotising their guests and unearthing their secrets.

Instead of plunging into this concept head-on, the movie offers ample room for Guruprasad to vent his frustration about life and cinema.

There is enough and more showboating, with the interviewer asking questions intended to boost the filmmaker's ego. For those who have followed Guruprasad's pre-release interviews, this portion of the film offers nothing new.

Falling short A still from *Ranganayaka*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ranganayaka (Kannada)
Director: Guruprasad
Cast: Jaggesh, Guruprasad, Srinivas Prabhu, Rachitha Mahalakshmi
Runtime: 121 minutes
Storyline: A filmmaker learns about his past life, in which he attempted to make the first ever Kannada movie.

Ranganayaka gets back on track when a hypnotised Guruprasad talks about being born as Padmanabha Sharma in his previous life. In 1896, a visit to Mumbai to see the motion picture invented by the legendary Lumière brothers inspires Padmanabha. He vows to make India's first motion picture in Kannada.

Y V Rao's *Sati Sulochana,* released on March 3, 1934, is Kannada's first-ever movie. *Ranganayaka* had the opportunity to explore incidents that led to this first Kannada film, but barring a scene that showcases the legendary Puttanna Kanagal, the movie fails to portray the bygone period interestingly. The director, who believes in cinematic liberty, could have delved deep into the challenges of making movies in the pre-technology era.

Guruprasad's films are known to have eccentric characters who indulge in dark humour, but in *Ranganayaka,* the context and background of the characters get zero attention.

Guruprasad's cry for saving the Kannada film industry seems well-intentioned, but*Ranganayaka* takes itself too seriously in the end, when it is actually much ado about nothing.

Ranganayaka is currently running in theatres

Modi lays foundation stone for airport improvement works in Belagavi, Hubballi

Belagavi and Hubballi are among 15 cities in the country to get a new terminal; construction of Hubballi Airport terminal to be completed in 2 years

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday virtually launched several infrastructure works across the country. There were some projects from Karnataka as well. Leaders from Belagavi and Hubballi watched the telecast of the ceremony. Mr. Modi said that the Central government's work is not limited to announcements and that it is implementing infrastructure and development projects regularly.

Several leaders attending the programme at the Hubballi Airport as the Prime Minister launches projects virtually on Sunday.
KIRAN BAKALE

"The government has been working continuously for the development of the country, taking up projects like upgrading airports, construction of railway stations, expansion, doubling and electrification of railway lines and other projects such as implementation of the new education policy, PM Kisan Samman Yojana, among others," he said.

He laid the foundation stone for the construction of new terminals of 15 airports in the country

This included the Belagavi Airport at Sambra, upgrade of the Hubballi Airport, and other projects.

Earlier, Rajya Sabha member Eranna Kadadi said that the new airport terminal is aimed at providing more facilities for passengers in the coming days. It needs such a facility as it is the third biggest city in the State, he said.

"The new terminal will offer better facilities like lifts, expanded parking and improved aircraft infrastructure. A tender has been floated for the project at an estimated cost of ₹230 crore. The new terminal will have four aero bridges, to increase handling capacity to 2,400 passengers during peak hours (1,200 arrivals and 1,200 departures). Once operational, the existing terminal will be repurposed to manage arrivals. AAI's consultants, Landrum and Brown, say that this expansion will enable the airport to cope with a traffic demand of 2.0 million passengers per annum (mppa) until 2037," Mr. Kadadi said.

Mr. Kadadi said that a proposal has been sent to the Centre to install a statue of Rani Channamma in front of the airport to commemorate the 200th year celebrations of the First War of Kittur against the East India company. Efforts to build a hi-tech ESIC hospital have begun in Belagavi, he said.

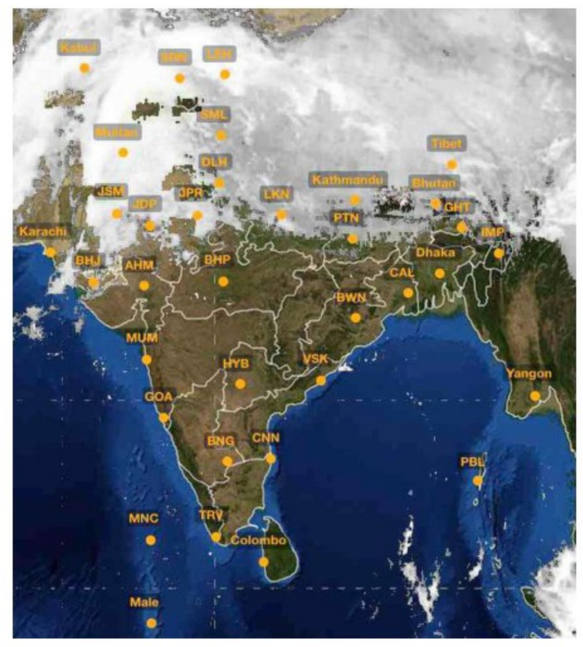
MP Mangala Angadi, MLAs Asif (Raju) Sait and Abhay Patil, MLC Prakash Hukkeri, who is the Karnataka Government Special Representative 2 at Delhi, Mayor Savita Kamble, Airport Authority officials and staff were present.

The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the second terminal of Hubballi Airport virtually on Sunday.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said that the construction of the terminal will be completed in two years at a cost of ₹340 crore. "It will enable parking of 4-10 flights and facilitate 2,400 passengers per day with international standard infrastructure," he said.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: No warning

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	30.4	13.2	Kozhikode	—	36.2	27.0
Ahmedabad	—	34.5	17.2	Kurnool	—	38.6	26.2
Aizawl	—	27.8	9.6	Lucknow	—	28.4	13.0
Allahabad	—	31.8	12.4	Madurai	—	37.2	25.6
Bengaluru	—	34.2	23.0	Mangaluru	—	33.4	24.6
Bhopal	—	34.5	15.9	Mumbai	—	30.9	22.0
Bhubaneswar	—	34.6	20.6	Mysuru	—	—	—
Chandigarh	—	26.3	12.8	New Delhi	—	28.1	11.4
Chennai	—	33.5	26.4	Patna	—	28.5	15.5
Coimbatore	—	36.0	24.8	Port Blair	—	32.5	24.6
Dehradun	—	27.6	11.5	Puducherry	—	34.2	25.3
Gangtok	0.3	18.2	9.5	Pune	—	38.6	19.7
Goa	—	31.9	23.6	Raipur	—	34.5	19.5
Guwahati	—	32.0	13.2	Ranchi	—	29.2	13.3
Hubballi	—	38.0	24.0	Shillong	—	20.8	8.6
Hyderabad	—	35.2	23.5	Shimla	—	22.2	8.6
Imphal	—	28.4	7.9	Srinagar	—	13.7	2.2
Jaipur	—	29.7	14.8	Thiruvananthapuram	—	34.9	25.7
Kochi	—	32.8	27.0	Tiruchi	—	36.5	25.4
Kohima	—	22.0	11.2	Vijayawada	—	35.0	24.2
Kolkata	—	31.7	19.0	Visakhapatnam	0.4	33.8	24.7

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	12	47	33	102	173	
Bengaluru	9	34	44	256	127	
Chennai	7	8	96	51	62	
Delhi	20	54	35	269	194	
Hyderabad	3	30	46	66	110	
Kolkata	24	85	18	157	128	
Lucknow	6	38	25	94	116	
Mumbai	—	98	42	168	137	
Pune	11	84	18	79	106	
Visakhapatnam	11	20	20	69	82	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Parbhani, Maharashtra recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 273 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 30

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

BJP seeks meeting of education experts to solve confusion over exams

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Asking the government if the treasury was empty that it had decided to stop providing answer papers for school examination, BJP MLC N. Ravikumar on Sunday urged the State government to convene a meeting of education experts to discuss the issue even as he accused the government of not following a clear policy on examinations.

"The government is collecting ₹50 from each of the 8 lakh to 8.5 lakh students to provide question papers for preparatory examination and has asked the students to get answer sheets. It is painful to see this situation. Is the coffer empty?" the MLC wondered at a press conference here on Sunday. He said: "The government has agreed to conduct two preparatory examinations for classes 11 and 12. However, it has asked students to get answer sheets." Parents and students are confused. The government should call meeting of experts to find a solution." Taking objection to Shakthi scheme of free travel for women in government buses, he said: "About 90 % of teachers are dependent on public transport. Number of buses have reduced. Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa is spending more time in politics than on education."

Vote for party that has delivered its promises, says Siddaramaiah

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said in Mandya on Sunday that it was imperative for the people to vote and elect a party that has delivered on its promises so as to ensure the State's progress.

Speaking at a public meeting of beneficiaries of various guarantee schemes, Mr. Siddaramaiah said that the Congress has walked the talk and kept its promises on implementing the five guarantee schemes within months of assuming power. "People of Karnataka have reposed faith in the Congress and this led to the victory of the party's candidates in 136 constituencies which exceeded our expectations in the Assembly elections last year," he said. Hence people of Mandya should ensure the victory of the Congress candidate in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections as well, he added. The CM sought to remind the public that he had accorded priority to irrigation and agriculture during his previous tenure and he was committed to farmers welfare.

He said the government has released over ₹631 crore for 33.25 lakh farmers by way of compensation. In addition, ₹600 crore has been released to the Agriculture Department towards crop insurance and another ₹800 crore would be released in due course, said Mr. Siddaramaiah.

THE HINDU
EDUCATIONPLUS

GET THE EDGE Follow us facebook.com/thehindu twitter.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

Develop thinking skills...

... is what textbooks ought to do, says Hannele Cantell, Associate Professor, Faculty of Behavioural Sciences and Education Psychology, University of Helsinki, Finland

Kinnari Pandya

Finland has one of the best education systems in the world. In this interview, Hannele Cantell, Associate Professor, Faculty of Behavioural Sciences and Education Psychology, University of Helsinki, and a schoolbook writer, talks about textbook development, and the role of textbooks in Finnish schools.

What role do textbooks play in the Finnish education system?

Historically, textbook use has undergone a change. Earlier, education in Finland was highly textbook- and teacher-oriented, but this later came under criticism. Some schools and teachers trusted phenomenon-based teaching, in which a concept or phenomenon is explored from a multi-disciplinary perspective. In this approach, the Internet became the main source of knowledge, causing problems, such as the absence of understanding of concepts of subjects/disciplines and structure in learning. In recent years, there has been a turn back to subject, content, and concepts. Where there are no textbooks, only the Internet, we have noticed that children don't learn enough. My suggestion, therefore, would be to make good, high-quality textbooks, and not to rely only on technology, especially the Internet!

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

What, according to you, should textbooks contain?

A skeleton of the important concepts and main knowledge to be learnt. Teachers should create "the muscles around the bones"; i.e. all activities, pedagogical exercises and tasks. While each teacher's style is different, textbooks ensure that every student has a similar opportunity to learn the basic concepts. Textbooks ought to connect to questions and creativity. Developing thinking skills is the key focus in Finnish textbooks. Textbooks don't work in isolation; we offer teachers pedagogical background materials and teaching materials to go with the textbooks.

These are essential aspects of quality schoolbooks/textbooks that any country striving for quality education would ensure. What matters is the extent to which these elements and principles are practised while developing textbooks, and preparing teachers to use the material in the same spirit and intent with which it is developed.

What are some key principles followed in designing and developing textbooks in Finland?

A group comprising teacher educators, subject and pedagogical (university) specialists and teachers from schools plans, develops and writes textbooks, exercise books and teachers' materials. All texts and visual material are peer-reviewed. The writers also design the pictures, maps, and so on. Everything is age-oriented.

The newest research should be seen in textbooks. For example, new knowledge and concepts about climate change and loss of biodiversity come from university researchers, and pedagogical expertise comes from teacher educators. The school teachers' role is to keep us focussed on classroom realities and the age group the book is meant for. Everyone writes and comments; it's an 'equal' process.

All classrooms have a diverse range of learners. Inclusion is a critical aspect of ensuring learning for all. How can a textbook take care of this?

In Finland, we collaborate with language planners (those who check if the language is correctly written). Often, we also ask Special Needs education experts to comment on the drafts so that the texts are easy to read and understand.

Visuals are important because many children/students have difficulty in reading very long texts; younger children can learn from pictures. Choosing pictures for a textbook has to be done responsibly.

For example, if you have space for only one picture of Europe, Finland or India, what kind of picture would you choose?

It is good to split the text into smaller chapters and to use meaningful subtitles. For example, compare these: a. Muscles b. Muscles make us move. The latter includes the chapter's main point. It gives the slower learners an idea about the chapter. But the first does not convey anything. In addition, it is good to have an abstract in a chapter as well as main/key points. Also, we have thinking questions and small ideas for student activities in every chapter. So, the textbook, in a way, is also an exercise book for students.

Views expressed are personal

The writer is Faculty at Azim Premji University

IIBS BENGALURU
Redefining Leading Talents
16 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
International Institute of Business Studies
Approved by AICTE | Affiliated to Bangalore City University | Ministry of Education, Government of India
NAAC A GRADE
Highest CGPA 3.20 in 4-Point Scale
ADMISSIONS OPEN FOR PGDM / MBA
BATCH (2024-26)
CAMPUS PLACEMENT 2021-23
HIGHEST SALARY PACKAGE OFFERED
PGDM ₹51 Lakhs Per Annum
MBA ₹48 Lakhs Per Annum
MERIT SCHOLARSHIP*
FEMALE CANDIDATES UPTO ₹2.30 LAKHS
MALE CANDIDATES UPTO ₹2.10 LAKHS
*TO AVAIL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP APPLY ON OR BEFORE 11TH MARCH 2024
www.iibs.edu.in | www.iibsonline.com
99864 15333 / 96202 48214
Near International Airport, Bengaluru-562 157.

Not law, nor duty

Indians are being lured into fighting another country's war

The death of a second Indian in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirmed, is proof of the toll the situation is taking on Indians who have been lured into working with the Russian military. The story of dozens of Indians stuck at the frontlines of the war – it was broken in a series of reports by *The Hindu* – prompted government agencies to crack down on recruiters in India this week, with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) raiding visa recruiters across India and filing cases against them for human trafficking and for duping people into travelling to Russia where they were coerced into dangerous jobs. Many of them were duped by online video advertisements that promised "safe jobs" with the military far from the frontlines, even indicating more lucrative jobs in the neighbouring European Schengen States. The MEA has now issued advisories and statements with appeals not to be "swayed" by such offers. After videos emerged of Indians stationed in areas seeing live action along the front between Russia and Ukraine in recently occupied territories, the government and India's Embassy in Moscow also said they are working with the Russian Army for early discharges to bring the Indians home.

The government's actions are much delayed and cold comfort to the families of the two men, from Surat and from Hyderabad, whose bodies are yet to be repatriated. Others have been seriously injured. What is most surprising is that the government has only spoken about the dangers of the Russian offers for military jobs now, when it is clear that the online ads and recruitments have been taking place for months. The government seems to have been made aware of the problem only after a Member of Parliament from Hyderabad wrote to the MEA in January, asking for assistance in bringing some of his constituents back. Since then, officials have given vague accounts of the numbers of those ("about 20") who may have already travelled to danger zones. Now, after the CBI raids, they have identified at least 35 men. Accounts from those in Russia put the number at well over 100. The government needs to explain why it has not been able to make the case to bring back all the men more forcefully with the Russian authorities, despite good relations with Moscow. It has also dodged questions on why it has simultaneously green-lighted a massive recruitment drive to Israel, another conflict zone. A more structured, transparent and humane approach will be required to make it clear, domestically, and to partners abroad, that Indian lives matter. The priority is to bring them home safely, but also to ensure that others are not put in harm's way, driven by the difficult economic situation back home.

Crisis of time

Rapid growth, such as Bengaluru's, and short-termism cannot coexist

The Karnataka water crisis has affected more than 7,000 villages, 1,100 wards, and 220 talukas thus far. The problem encompasses Mandya and Mysuru districts, where a major Cauvery river watershed and the Krishnaraja Sagar dam are located, and both important sources of water to Bengaluru. While the capital has hogged the headlines, the effects of the crisis are wider. Reports have suggested that the distal cause is the 'insufficient' rainfall last year, following the surplus in 2022, and the resulting under-'replenishment' of the Cauvery. Erratic rainfall is not new to Karnataka. A Coffee Agro-forestry Network (CAFNET) project, a decade ago, assessed 60 years of data and found the rainy season over Kodagu had shrunk by two weeks in three decades while annual rainfall seemed to undulate in a 12-14-year cycle. Yet, the crisis now has come as a surprise thanks to Bengaluru's lack of preparation, a travesty for being one of India's wealthiest urban municipalities and home to many research institutions. Bengaluru consumes roughly 1,400 million litres a day each from the Cauvery and groundwater reserves. The groundwater recharge rate is much lower while the Cauvery's was compromised by last year's 'deficient' rain. These are deficits only relative to Bengaluru's demand. The situation is worse further away from the city's centre. This is ironic because these areas do not receive piped water from the Cauvery and depend on groundwater and water tankers, whereas the city was engineered for centuries until the 19th to move away from water from distant sources and towards its surfeit of lakes. Seasonal lakes have since dwindled, while perennial lakes have been strangled by concretisation and sewage.

Climate change is a crisis of time. It precipitates non-linear changes that lead to disproportionate, and sometimes irreversible, outcomes, forcing underprepared governments to mount rapid responses to forces that have been festering for decades. Even if the erratic rainfall is unrelated to climate change, the phenomenon only promises more unpredictability. In this regard, Bengaluru, and most Indian cities, will achieve little when they mount stopgap measures in the event of a crisis and drop the long-term view once the crisis has ended. Rapid growth, such as Bengaluru has had this century, and short-termism cannot coexist. There is a need for bipartisan solutions that transcend the change in government every five years; a circular water economy that maximises the utility of every litre, reducing the city's dependence on external sources; and, not to forget, a clean and healthy Cauvery.

Electoral bonds, the State Bank and the art of evasion

Anjali Bhardwaj

is a transparency activist associated with the National Campaign for Peoples' Right to Information (NCPRI) and the Satark Nagrik Sangathan (SNS)

Amrita Johri

is a transparency activist associated with the National Campaign for Peoples' Right to Information (NCPRI) and the Satark Nagrik Sangathan (SNS)

The voter needs to know the sources of financial contributions to parties well before she casts her vote in the general election

In a landmark judgment on February 15, 2024, a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court of India declared the electoral bond scheme unconstitutional. This was a scheme which opened the floodgates of unlimited anonymous funding of political parties and consolidated the role of big money in the Indian political system.

Directive and response

To give "logical and complete effect" to its ruling, the top court put a stop to the issuance of electoral bonds, and gave the State Bank of India, or the SBI (the bank that was authorised to issue and encash the bonds), 21 days to disclose two sets of information to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to put up on its website. The first was details of the electoral bonds purchased since April 12, 2019, which would "include the date of purchase of each Electoral Bond, the name of the purchaser of the bond and the denomination of the Electoral Bond purchased". The second was on details of electoral bonds redeemed by political parties for the same time frame. The Court ruled: "SBI must disclose details of each Electoral Bond encashed by political parties which shall include the date of encashment and the denomination of the Electoral Bond".

Just two days before the expiry of the deadline laid down by the Court, the SBI filed an affidavit recording its inability to decode, compare and disclose the requisite data in the prescribed time period. The bank claimed that to protect donors' anonymity, details of purchase of bonds and of redemption were decoupled and stored in separate silos, and there was no central database. Further, it stated that some details such as the number of bonds were stored digitally, while others, such as the name of purchaser and KYC details, were stored physically. In order to provide donor information, the date of issue of each bond would have to be checked and matched against the date of purchase by a particular donor. This information would then have to be matched against the bond redemption information – which makes up the second silo. According to the SBI, to re-match them would be a task requiring a significant amount of effort. Therefore, it sought an additional four months to comply with the Court's directions to submit the information.

The bank's affidavit

The absurdity of the SBI's request is best appreciated by examining the submissions made by the bank in its affidavit.

The affidavit states that since April 2019, a total of 22,217 electoral bonds were used to make donations to various political parties. Donor details were kept in a sealed cover at the designated branches of the SBI where the bonds could be transacted, and all such sealed covers were deposited in the main branch of the SBI in Mumbai. Further, at the time of redemption by political parties, the original bonds and the pay-in slips were stored in a sealed cover and also sent to the Mumbai branch.

Thus, it can be noted that the names of all purchasers of electoral bonds and the details of encashment of all bonds, including the name of the political party redeeming the bond, date and denomination of bond encashed are readily available at a single location, albeit in sealed covers. Further, since the date of issue and denomination of all electoral bonds are digitally recorded, this would also be accessible at the SBI's main branch in Mumbai. Surely, opening the sealed covers and matching the information would not be a herculean task!

The claim of the SBI, the largest public sector bank in India, which serves 50 crore customers, that it needs four months to match purchaser and redeemer information for 22,217 electoral bonds is baffling.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the SBI's non-compliance with the directions of the Supreme Court is fuelling public suspicion that the bank is attempting to evade revealing donor identities before the general election 2024 is held.

The centrality of the voter's right to know

In its judgment, the Court held that the voter's right to information includes the right to know financial contributions to a political party because of its influence on electoral politics and on governmental decisions. The Court noted that contributions made by companies are purely business transactions made with the intent of securing benefits in return. That 94% of the electoral bonds, in value terms, were of the denomination of ₹1 crore is an indication of the quantum of corporate funding. The Court ruled that information about sources of political party funding would enable voters to assess if there is a correlation between policy making and financial contributions, and empower people to track quid pro quo.

Once again, it is up to the Supreme Court to call out the SBI's delaying tactics and uphold the voter's constitutional right to know under Article 19(1)a. It needs to ensure that the timelines defined in the judgment for disclosing details of electoral bonds are adhered to, and voters are armed with this crucial information when they cast their vote in the general election. The Bench that was led by the Chief Justice of India had noted in its judgment that "information about funding to a political party is essential for a voter to exercise their freedom to vote in an effective manner."

France's exceptional women, their imprint on diplomacy

Thierry Mathou

is the Ambassador of France to India

There is great potential for France and India to further women's rights across the world

March 4, 2024 will be a day to remember. It marks the inscription in the French Constitution, of the "freedom of women to voluntarily terminate a pregnancy", making France the first country in the world to enshrine it as a constitutional right, 49 years after abortion became legal. At a moment when women's rights are under threat in many regions of the world, this decision also sends out a universal message of solidarity to women across the globe.

Groundbreaking work

To understand the history of women's rights in France, particularly the right to bodily autonomy, one has to go back to the year 1949 when French feminist icon Simone de Beauvoir published *The Second Sex*.

In the second volume of this very long book, which opens with the infamous statement-turned-feminist motto, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman", Beauvoir dedicates an entire section to abortion in the chapter on motherhood. In this groundbreaking philosophical work, where she marries feminist thoughts with existential theories, the writer lays the theoretical groundwork for pro-choice advocacy. While challenging the reductionist image of a woman as a mother and caretaker, she champions women's right to the freedom of choice, which is essential to existentialism. According to her, "if a woman is to take charge of her biological destiny, if she is to give life on her terms, then she needs, in addition to contraception, a free, safe and legal abortion service available to her."

She strongly criticises the hypocrisy of her times where innumerous women resort to abortion, yet have to do it clandestinely. Though abortion was largely practised during Beauvoir's times, a woman could be sentenced to up to five years of imprisonment. The absence of the right to abortion is part of the larger institutional oppression against women, which results from patriarchy. She states, "Free, safe and legal abortion should be available to every woman. The alternative to a legal abortion is a backstreet abortion, which often has dire consequences for women, such as haemorrhaging, septicaemia, and death itself". Her statement recalls the poignant autobiographical account by Nobel Prize winner for Literature Annie Ernaux in *L'évènement* where she narrates the story of her illegal abortion back in 1963.

When *The Second Sex* was published in 1949, the text was an immediate success and translated into dozens of languages across the world, paving the way for the legalisation of abortion in France. In line with her philosophical beliefs, Beauvoir was living in an open relationship with French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, whom she never married nor had children with. Consequently, she was subjected to criticisms for her disruptive ideas and way of life.

A powerful petition

In 1971, Beauvoir penned the "Manifesto of the 343", signed by 343 eminent women who opened up to publicly claim that they had had an abortion. The petition, published in the French social democratic magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur*, starts with this powerful statement, "One million women in France have abortions every year. Condemned to secrecy, they do so in dangerous conditions, while under medical supervision, this is one of the simplest procedures. Society is silencing these millions of women. I declare that I am one of them. I declare that I have had an abortion. Just as we demand free access to contraception, we demand the freedom to have an abortion." This act of civil disobedience, laying bare the hypocrisy of a system while exposing themselves to potential prosecution, was instrumental in the adoption of the Veil law four years later, which decriminalised abortion for French women. It was named after the then Health Minister and women's rights icon Simone Veil.

The Second Sex remains, until today, a foundational book for modern feminism. It was first translated into Hindi in 1991, by Indian feminist and novelist, Prabha Khaitan, as *Stree Upekshita*, which translates literally as "The Neglecting of Women". Well-versed in western and Indian philosophy, Khaitan had written extensively on existentialism. Nevertheless, there were several omissions and simplifications in the translation.

This is the reason why national award winning Hindi publisher Vani Prakashan decided to commission a new translation in 2022, with Monica Singh translating it directly from French. The first of the two volumes was recently released last month during the New Delhi World Book Fair, giving Hindi readers full and faithful access to the text.

This speaks of the long-lasting influence of Beauvoir and the esteem with which she is held by feminists worldwide. The fact that abortion has now become a fundamental right, enshrined in the French Constitution, owes much to Beauvoir.

This historic decision is also an occasion to remember another iconic champion of women's rights in Europe, Simone Veil, the revered French politician who survived the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. She defied institutional sexism to push through the law legalising abortion in France in 1975 when she was Minister of Public Health, and became the first female leader of the European Parliament. Laid to rest at the Pantheon, she is among the eminent figures who still inspires all those who fight for women's rights all over the world. We hope that Simone Veil and Simone de Beauvoir feel proud of how France has carried forward their legacy.

A feminist foreign policy

The heritage of these exceptional women is reflected today in our work as diplomats: France champions a feminist foreign policy, with a dedicated strategy that seeks to mainstream the promotion of gender equality and the rights of women and girls in all its bilateral undertakings, development assistance, and advocacy in multilateral bodies. In 2021, France co-chaired the Generation Equality Forum, which was the most important international feminist event since the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995, in partnership with civil society and young people.

India has historically made strong international commitments in favour of women's rights, including efforts to implement Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender equality), joining the 2019 Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality, and, recently, gaining membership in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. I believe there is strong potential for France and India to do more together to further women's rights around the world.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Resignation of EC, impact

The resignation of the Election Commissioner (Page 1, March 10) will now focus on the nature and extent of the 'working relationship' between the government of the day and the Election Commission of India. Regardless of the degree of freedom the Election Commission enjoys under the present regime, it is essential that those who are entrusted with the responsibility of holding elections must realise that every citizen of this country wants an absolutely transparent electoral process at every stage. How fair the all-important Lok Sabha election is going to be ensured in these turbulent times remains to be seen.

A. Venkatasubramanian,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

Savagery on campus

The 'Ground Zero' page report ("Wires, belts and the death of a student", March 9) was distressing to read. Irrespective of the political fallout of the issue and the CBI inquiry, we, as a society, need to ponder over the following. The distressing descriptions of the level of brutality that some students exhibited towards a fellow student make us wonder where we have gone wrong in raising the 'next generation'. Such brutality is seen in times of war, where hatred is indoctrinated in the minds of the warring parties. But to treat a fellow student so mercilessly for alleged 'misbehaviour' is beyond comprehension. Or, is it that the boy's tormentors were under the influence of substances that destroy rational thought? If this is the case, then drug peddling on campuses needs to be looked into. A government which is striving to bring in foreign varsities might well rethink how conducive an environment Kerala's politics-ridden campuses provide for foreign entry. This incident might well turn out to be a dampener to the government's efforts in that direction. The only solution is to allow the investigative agencies to conduct a fair inquiry and mete out the severest punishment to the guilty. Only then can India's most literate State show itself to be ranking somewhere in the humanity index.

Sharada Sivaram,
Ernakulam, Kerala

I am an 80-year-old reader and the report made me ill. I could not eat. Are we educating students or are we raising barbarians?

M.S. Nair,
Palakkad, Kerala

The tragic incident is a stark reminder of the urgent need to root out this 'tradition' or 'campus ritual'. Ragging, often dismissed as harmless fun, can have serious consequences, as this case demonstrates. It not only affects the physical and mental well-being of students but also undermines the very essence of a healthy academic environment. It is imperative for educational institutions to take strict measures to prevent ragging. This includes implementing anti-ragging policies, raising awareness about its consequences, and providing support systems for victims and survivors. Additionally, students must be encouraged to report incidents of ragging without fear of reprisal.

Anita George,
Thevara, Kerala

It is disheartening to witness the recurrence of incidents related to ragging, despite so-called preventive measures being in place. It is crucial for educational institutions to foster a safe and inclusive environment that promotes learning and mutual respect.

Krishna R. Nair,
Thevara, Kerala

I write this letter as professor and chairman of the department of biochemistry and microbiology in a college of science and technology in Kerala. The case is shocking, and is one that shames humanity and corrodes the values and purpose of education. Even more baffling is the vice-chancellor, dean and faculty members turning a blind eye. The existing University Grant Commission's 'Regulations on Curbing the Menace of Ragging' lack teeth. Stringent sections under the Indian Penal Code must be invoked against the perpetrators of such brutal crimes, which must serve as a deterrent to others.

Dr. Biju C. Mathew,
Thiruvananthapuram

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

We need limits on election campaign spending

Rangarajan R.

is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. He trains civil-service aspirants at 'Officers IAS Academy'. Views are personal

During the run up to the general elections to Lok Sabha of 2004, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government put out advertisements with the tag line 'India Shining.' The campaign led to a controversy over the use of public money. Reports state that an estimated ₹150 crore was spent for this campaign, arguably one of the biggest government-sponsored advertisement campaigns until then. Over the past two decades, this trend has caught up with both Central and State governments spending a lot on advertisements before elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

Limits on spending

In a democratic country, it is essential for a government to spread awareness about its schemes and policies. In the first few decades in independent India, this was primarily done through public meetings. In the last three decades, awareness has been spread through advertisements on print and electronic media, which have a wide reach. However, at present, government advertisements published or broadcast before elections tend to be campaigns of the ruling party and establish personality cults. According to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, the Central government had spent ₹3,020 crore on advertisements between 2018-19 and 2022-23. It must be noted that the amount spent was significantly higher at ₹1,179 crore during the election year of 2018-19 as against ₹408 crore in 2022-23. This expenditure is likely to rise in 2023-24 as the general elections are due in April-May. The Supreme Court through its orders in May 2015 and March 2016 laid down guidelines for the regulation of government advertisements. Even then, ruling governments have an advantage before elections when it comes to publishing advertisements that disturb the level playing field.

A famous quote from *Hamlet* goes, 'more honoured in the breach than in the observance'. That is meant for customs and laws that are better off being ignored than being followed. In the Indian electoral context, however, it has become a norm to breach the limits on election expenditure. In fact, this breach is considered as one of the essential traits for winning an election.

The election expenditure limit for candidates is ₹95 lakh per Lok Sabha constituency in larger States and ₹75 lakh in smaller States. It is an open secret that candidates of all major political parties breach this limit by a wide margin even when we do not consider the illegal distribution of cash and gifts to voters. In States notorious for this corrupt electoral practice, the official limit is not even a fraction of the actual election expenditure.

In India, there are no limits on the expenditure of political parties during elections. The official expenditure declared by the BJP and Congress for the 2019 elections was ₹1,264 crore and ₹820 crore, respectively. However, a report by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) states that political parties spent about ₹50,000 crore during the elections with the BJP spending about 50% of this amount and the Congress about 20%. The report suggests that 35% of this money was spent on campaigns, while 25% was distributed amongst voters illegally. Most of this funding comes from corporate houses and businessmen. This creates an unholy nexus between donors and elected representatives.

The elections in other large democracies such as the U.S. and U.K. have also become costly affairs. However, it is the opaque nature of most of the donations coupled with the distribution of cash for votes that weakens the process of free and fair elections in India. The Supreme Court has struck down the electoral bonds scheme that will remove opacity in legal donations. But this is akin to putting a band-aid on a bullet wound as the majority of the funding continues to be in unaccounted cash.

Towards a level playing field

The Indrajit Gupta Committee (1998) and the Law Commission report (1999) advocated state funding of elections. This means that the government will contribute money to political parties or candidates for them to contest elections. The feasibility and mechanism for implementing this measure is doubtful in the present context. It requires consensus among all the political parties and discipline in following the norms of such state funding.

Nevertheless, the issue of the burgeoning cost of elections can be sidestepped only at our own peril. The CMS pegs the likely expenditure during the 2024 general elections at ₹1 lakh crore. In this regard, certain practicable steps for creating a level playing field and ensuring free and fair elections can be implemented if there is political will. These are based on the report, 'Proposed Electoral Reforms', submitted by the Election Commission of India in 2016. First, government advertisements should be banned six months prior to any general election. Second, the law must be amended to state that a party's 'financial assistance' to its candidate should also be within the limits of election expenditure prescribed for a candidate. Third, there should be a ceiling on expenditure by parties. This may be kept at not more than the expenditure ceiling limit provided for a candidate multiplied by the number of candidates of the party contesting the election. Finally, additional judges can be appointed in High Courts for speedy disposal of election-related cases that would act as a deterrent against the violation of norms. These reforms would require bipartisan political support to be effected. However, unless they are implemented, the massive expenses of election spectacles will be borne by us, 'We the people'.

Unless there are certain reforms, the public will continue to bear the massive expenses of these election spectacles

The jobs crisis spells trouble for Jagan

Protesters have been demanding to know why his promises remain unkept

STATE OF PLAY

P. Sujatha Varma
pothuri.varma@thehindu.co.in

In December 2018, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, who was in the Opposition then, said that there were 2.3 lakh government jobs in the State, which he would fill immediately if voted to power. He empathised with the "woeful plight" of the thousands of young people, who, he said, had been let down by the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) government which had released a DSC (District Selection Committee) notification to fill 7,000 teacher posts against the 23,000 vacant posts in the State. Mr. Reddy promised to end their wait and release a 'mega DSC' filling all the vacant posts, if elected. He also assured them that he would release a job calendar on the first day of January every year.

None of this happened. As a result, Mr. Reddy faces the wrath of the unemployed youth in the State ahead of the elections. Besides, there is growing disillusionment from other quarters. For instance, Mr. Reddy has not restored the Old Pension Scheme, which he had promised to do, while campaigning for the 2019 elections.

After a series of protests by student and youth organisations for the promised job calendar and DSC notification, the YSR Congress government recently announced a DSC to recruit 6,100 teachers in State-run schools. This sparked anger. Young people took to the streets calling the 'mega DSC' a "grand betrayal and a sham". They said that the government released the notification just before the elections knowing fully well that the recruitment process cannot be completed before the code of conduct comes into effect.

The Periodic Labour Force Survey, conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, shows that Andhra Pradesh had the highest unemployment rate (24%) among graduates between July 2022 and June 2023. The job crisis has provided an opportunity to the Opposition parties to attack the government. TDP leaders say there is growing frustration among young jobseekers, who are forced to leave the State in search of employment opportunities.

Mr. Reddy's sister, who is president of the Andhra Pradesh Congress, launched a scathing attack on him for "taking the youth of the State for a ride". She recalled how former Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, or YSR, who was her father, had released a mega DSC to recruit 52,000 teachers in the State. She said that her brother claimed to be YSR's successor but had failed to follow in his footsteps. The Congress went on a 'Chalo Secretariat' protest, which was foiled by the police. Nevertheless, it has managed to grab public attention by highlighting the problem.

Aspirants of jobs in the police department are also upset; they say Mr. Reddy has not fulfilled his promise of filling the 26,000 vacant posts by notifying 6,500 posts annually on Police Commemoration Day. Following their protest, the government released a notification for 6,511 posts. The written exam to recruit 6,100 constables and 411 sub-inspectors was held on February 22, 2023, but the aspirants are still waiting to be called for the physical exam.

There are a few posts of librarians in the College Education wing and a few posts in the Women and Child Welfare Department which are waiting to be filled through the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission. Aspirants say the Commission did not issue the notification even after the posts were sanctioned by the Finance Department.

Vexed with the government's apathy, members of the Andhra Pradesh Unemployed Joint Action Committee have embarked on a Statewide yatra to console the unemployed youth. They have been visiting universities and libraries to speak to the youth about the existing job scenario and to ask them to share their experiences so they can convey these to the government. They have also been insisting that the number of posts in the DSC be increased to fill the 2.32 lakh vacant posts in various government departments; that the age limit of candidates seeking jobs in the general category be increased to 47 years; and that changes be made in the date of either the DSC exam or the Group-I prelims test, as both are scheduled on March 17. They have also demanded the withdrawal of cases booked against job-seekers for participating in agitations.

On its part, the government claims that it has provided 6,38,087 jobs in its tenure. But the climate of discontent spells trouble for Mr. Reddy who has made more promises that he can fulfil.

A possible solution for Bengaluru's water crisis

Rainwater harvesting could make a dent on the freshwater needs of the city, but it pales in comparison to wastewater

DATA POINT

Rashmi Kulranjan & Shashank Palur

As Bengaluru grows further outwards and faster than it can cope, water supply is one of the first casualties. Attempting to piece together the puzzle - where Bengaluru's water comes from, where it is stored, who consumes it, where the wastewater goes - is an essential first step to reduce the city's vulnerability to floods and drought. We zoom into four different aspects to do this.

The city's population increased from 8.7 million in 2011 to about 12.6 million in 2021 (projected). Most of the growth has been in the periphery **(Maps 1 and 2)**.

We estimate that the total demand for freshwater is approximately 2,632 million litres per day (MLD), which is higher than what is officially supplied through the Cauvery and through groundwater sources. Water from Cauvery that is used for the city's needs has increased from 940 MLD to 1,460 MLD in the same period which, after subtracting losses, only serves half the demand. In addition, Bengaluru consumes an estimated 1,392 MLD of groundwater. This is worrying because groundwater recharge rates remain significantly lower than extraction rates.

Bengaluru recorded an above-average rainfall in 2022 while 2023 ended in a deficit. As the rainfall levels dropped, so did the groundwater level, and the periphery was impacted the most **(Map 3)**.

As the water table drops, these areas now face borewell failures. Moreover, as shown in **Map 4**, many areas in the periphery don't yet have access to piped supply.

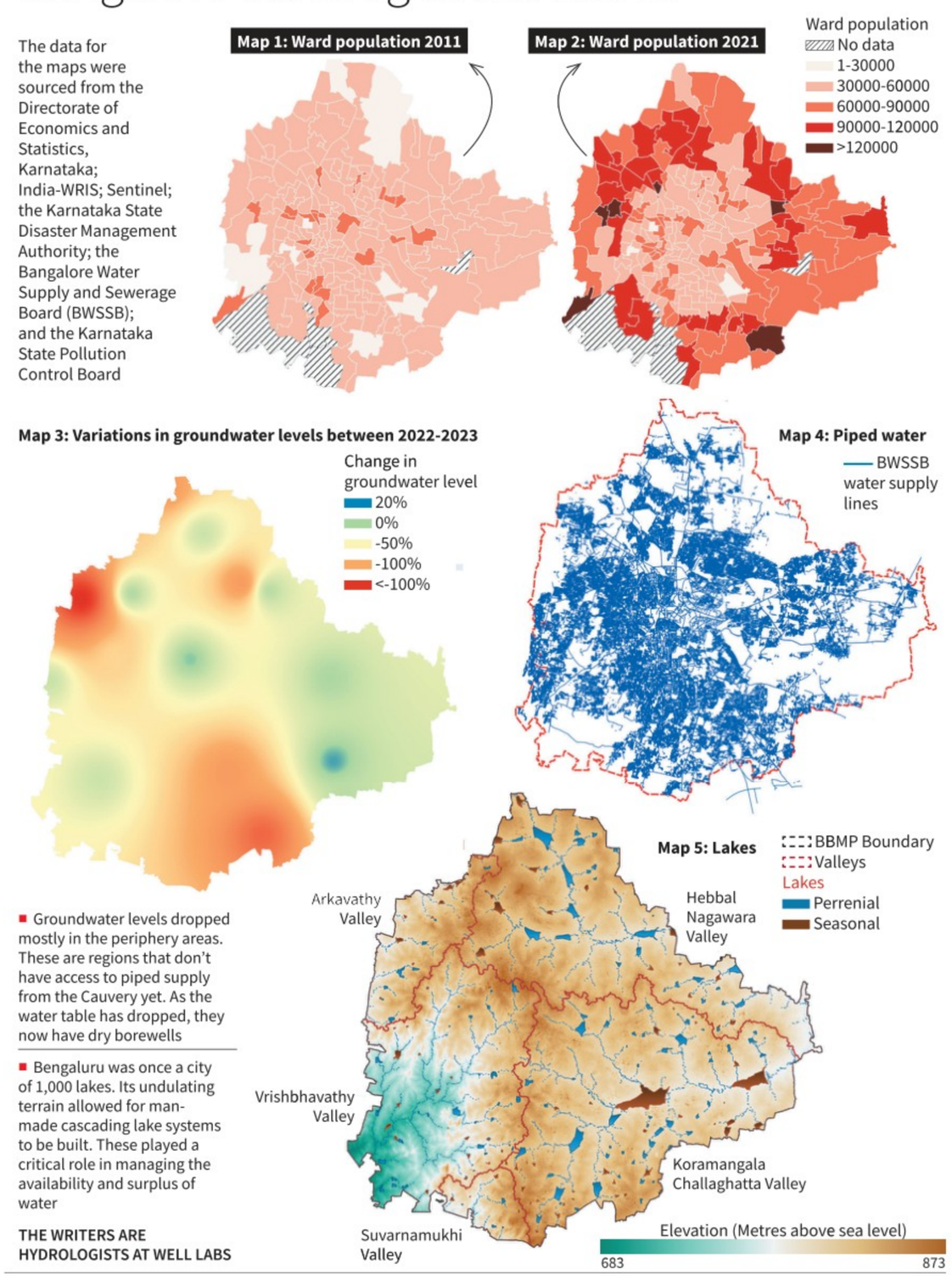
Bengaluru was not always dependent on pipelines or borewells. Most of its water bodies were originally 'tanks', rainwater harvesting structures constructed mainly to serve irrigation and livestock. The undulating terrain of the city allowed for man-made cascading lake systems, which played a critical role in water supply. When piped water supply was introduced, lakes began to lose importance. Today, with rapid urbanisation, lakes have either been directly encroached upon or are drying out as the connections between them are lost. This has not only resulted in a more parched city but also aggravated the risk of flooding. The lakes and storm water drains have also become a dumping ground for sewage from the buildings around them and in their catchment, affecting the possibility of them being used to capture rainwater or storm water.

The maximum volume available to be held in lakes is about 41,600 million litres, but through a model we developed, we estimate that about 1,000 million litres of sewage is released into lakes every day making it unsuitable for use as a source of water. In **Map 5** (for Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike alone), we differentiate between perennial and seasonal lakes. Most of the water bodies in the city were once seasonal, meaning they captured and stored rainfall. The ones that are left are now largely perennial as a result of sewage entering them and keeping them full throughout the year.

Rainwater harvesting could make a dent on the freshwater needs of the city but it pales in comparison to wastewater. Currently, only one third of the city's wastewater is redirected for external reuse, which means it is taken to Kolar, Chikkaballapur, and Devanahalli where it is used to replenish both groundwater and surface water sources. The remaining water flows into lakes and runs off land to join rivers downstream. This means the huge quantum of wastewater generated in the city is an untapped resource. Once treated to the required quality, wastewater can significantly mitigate freshwater consumption and can be crucial in making the city water resilient during low rainfall years.

Bengaluru bursting at the seams

The data for the maps were sourced from the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Karnataka; India-WRIS; Sentinel; the Karnataka State Disaster Management Authority; the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB); and the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board



■ Groundwater levels dropped mostly in the periphery areas. These are regions that don't have access to piped supply from the Cauvery yet. As the water table has dropped, they now have dry borewells

■ Bengaluru was once a city of 1,000 lakes. Its undulating terrain allowed for man-made cascading lake systems to be built. These played a critical role in managing the availability and surplus of water

THE WRITERS ARE HYDROLOGISTS AT WELL LABS

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 11, 1974

Poor nations' inestimable gift to the rich

United Nations, March 10: The UN Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim says that deprived of immigrant doctors and nurses from developing countries, "Large segments of the hospital systems of the United States and the United Kingdom would collapse."

In a new report on the "Brain Drain", he adds that the United States, Britain and Canada, as the Chief recipients of such medical personnel, are actually "receiving a gift from the developing countries" worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year. He explains these countries get people trained to perform "critically important medical service" without having to pay for their training, because they have already been educated back home.

"It costs about $50,000 to train a physician in the United States" he points out. "Some 7,000 foreign physicians were admitted to the United States in 1972."

At that rate, it would have cost $350 million to turn out the American doctors that would have been needed had the foreigners not come in.

Dr. Waldheim suggests some guidelines for stopping the brain drain: the developing countries should check immigration and tax nationals who insist on studying abroad after being educated at Government expense. The developing nations also should be compensated by the developed countries for the trained personnel they supply.

Dr. Waldheim's report, prepared at the request of the General Assembly with the help of a group of experts, will come up in the UN Committee on Science and Technology and Development, which begins a 19-day session here to-morrow.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 11, 1924

Devil dancers at Wembley

London, March 10: In the Commons to-day Lient-Colonel James drew attention to attempts at Darjeeling to recruit a troupe of Lama Devil dancers to perform at the Wembley Exhibition. He declared that the proposal was arousing strong religious resentment and suggested that steps should be taken to see that religious susceptibilities were not outraged by the engagement of the troupe. Professor Richards replied that he was enquiring of the Government of India of this matter.

From Page One

'Differences' may have led to Goel quitting

After arriving in Delhi, Mr. Goel attended meetings related to the Lok Sabha election, with Mr. Kumar, at the EC headquarters on March 7. However, on March 8, he reportedly skipped a meeting between EC brass and Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla regarding the election preparations and instead sent his resignation to the President of India without informing the CEC.

"There were attempts from the government to dissuade him and reconcile their differences but he remained firm on his exit," officials in the government said.

His resignation was accepted by the President on March 9 and the Ministry of Law and Justice issued a gazette notification stating that Mr. Goel's resignation was accepted with effect from the same day.

"Except perhaps the CEC and other highest ranking officials in the government, nobody even within the ECI had an inkling about Mr. Goel's abrupt decision to resign till the gazette notification was issued," claimed multiple sources in the government and the EC.

"The resignation of Arun Goel as Election Commissioner last evening raises three questions," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X. "Did he actually resign over differences with the Chief Election Commissioner or with the Modi government, which does the front-seat driving for all supposedly independent institutions? Or did he resign for personal reasons? Or did he, like the Calcutta High Court Judge a few days back, resign to contest the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls on a BJP ticket?" Mr. Ramesh asked.

Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) leader Sanjay Raut alleged that the ECI "has been privatised" and "become a branch of the BJP" over the last ten years, raising concerns about who would replace Mr. Goel. "Like the BJP's people have been appointed in the High Courts, Supreme Court, Governor's house, in the same manner, they will appoint two of their BJP people here too."

Mr. Goel's term in the Election Commission was due to last till November 2027.

India inks FTA with 4 European countries

The EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries, which are separate from the European Union, said that for the first time, the FTA also included a chapter on commitments to human rights and sustainable development. The agreement will come into force after ratification by the EFTA states, expected possibly by the end of the year.

Touting the clauses on investment as a unique achievement, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said it was "for the first time in the history of the world that we are inking an FTA with a binding commitment to invest $100 billion in India from EFTA countries". However, EFTA Ministers clarified that the commitment was in fact a "goal" for both sides, based on the current levels of investment, pegged at about $10.7 billion, the GDP predictions, and the estimated value of the TEPA.

According to the TEPA's Chapter 7 that deals with "Investment Promotion and Cooperation", the two sides had shared "objectives" to increase foreign direct investment from EFTA states into India by $50 billion within 10 years and another $50 billion in the next five years. It would also "aim to facilitate the generation of 1 million jobs within 15 years in India" resulting from those investments.
(With inputs from Jacob Koshy)

Trinamool list for all 42 seats in Bengal out

Among those dropped by the Trinamool is Barrackpore MP Arjun Singh, who won the 2019 election on BJP ticket but later returned to Trinamool. The party has renominated Asansol MP Shatrughan Sinha, who won in 2021. The Trinamool Congress has also placed its faith in new faces, including youth leader Debangshu Bhattacharya from Tamluk, and Indian Police Service officer Prasun Banerjee from Malda North. Among women MPs, it renominated Mahua Moitra from Krishnanagar and Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar from Barasat.

'Gig workers suffer from lack of social security'

Overall, 5,302 cab drivers and 5,028 delivery persons across eight cities – Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Lucknow, Kolkata, Jaipur, and Indore – participated in a 50-question survey; 78% of the respondents were in the age group of 21 to 40 years.

Due to the demanding work hours, the study found that drivers are physically exhausted, and exposed to an increased risk of road traffic accidents, especially due to the '10-minute delivery at the doorstep' policy of certain e-commerce platforms. The lack of social and job security creates additional stress and leads to potential health issues. "It was found that 76% of the delivery persons are struggling to make their ends meet and over 80% of app-based cab drivers were not satisfied with the fares offered by the companies," the report said. Another major complaint of the workers is the issue of customer misbehaviour.

'$100-bn investment target led to breakthrough'

The EFTA countries' commitment to invest $100 billion and ensure 1 million jobs in India will primarily involve the private sector, and there is huge interest in the market here, says the Swiss State Secretary for Economic Affairs, one of the top negotiators of the just-concluded free trade agreement

INTERVIEW

Helene Budliger Artieda

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Expressing confidence that the EFTA bloc of four countries Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland would be able to reach the target set by the India-EFTA Free Trade Agreement of $100 billion investment and one million jobs, one of the deal's top negotiators cautioned that investment would come from the private sectors, and governments could only encourage and facilitate the outcomes. Speaking to *The Hindu* after successfully concluding the deal, Helene Budliger Artieda, the Swiss State Secretary for Economic Affairs, said that agreeing on the investment chapter was a "breakthrough moment" for negotiations on the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement. Excerpts:

Did you think this deal would happen before Indian elections?

Yes. I mean, you can never be 100% sure, because of course, none of us were alone in the room. But I really felt sincere interest, trust and friendship [between India and EFTA negotiators]. The breakthrough moment was when we decided that we will do this chapter on direct investment, because then all of a sudden, there was a sense that we could really have a fair and balanced deal, which would be win-win... five times win (for all five parties).

When it comes to that chapter, how binding are the commitments to invest $100 billion and ensure 1 million jobs?

SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

I can tell you that from companies in Switzerland and others that we have spoken to, there is massive interest in India. We reached the figure of $100 billion through a method: taking a base of FDI in 2022 – which is U.S. $10.7 billion, and GDP projections provided by India, as well as the massive market here. The fact that the EFTA bloc managed to seal the deal even before our European neighbour (EU) has heightened the interest in India. But I have to be very clear. It's not the Swiss government that will do the investment, but the Swiss private sector. And you know, if, for some reason, this promise [of $100 billion and 1 million jobs] is not realised, we will have to face the consequences of going back to square one, when we had no easy market access.

Do you also hope to negotiate a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) to protect the investments?

It would have been difficult to negotiate a BIT as well as the TEPA before the elections, but I am positive that we will be able to begin discussions on an investment treaty soon.

The framework conditions for the investment chapter are important – a whole list of things that need to come in place on creating the environment for investments.

How long before the TEPA goes into force?

Well, each of the countries has a different time span and ratification process. In Switzerland, we hope to bring the agreement for ratification by parliament in the autumn session, so hopefully [we could ratify] by the end of the year and bring the agreement into force thereafter. We expect other EFTA countries would also have completed their processes by then.

How did you agree to drop the data exclusivity clause eventually?

The data exclusivity clause was in a draft text and was never agreed upon.

We would have loved to have that in the agreement, because Intellectual Property Rights issue is absolutely key and strategic for us. However, we were happy that India was able to meet us halfway with the working Patents regime.

How do you respond to the accusation that Switzerland attempted to bully India to accept the data exclusivity clause, which, if adopted, would have made important generic medicines more expensive to produce?

How could a country of nine million people bully a G-20 country of 1.4 billion? We negotiated our position with Indian negotiators, who are very good. I do regret that a draft text was leaked in India, but that had not been agreed upon.

Opposition rattled by BJP's development push, says PM

At U.P. rally, Modi says Opposition leaders are attacking him out of frustration, exhorts voters to help BJP meet 400-seat target; he also launches development projects worth over ₹34,700 crore

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Coming down heavily on the Opposition for their "*parivarvadi*" (dynastic) politics, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the development work initiated by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led double-engine government has rattled such elements.

Speaking at a meeting in Uttar Pradesh's Azamgarh, Mr. Modi said the Opposition has been attacking him out of frustration. "As Uttar Pradesh reaches new horizons of development, the venom of appeasement is weakening, forcing the rattled *parivarvadi* leaders to abuse me every day. They say Modi doesn't have a family of his own. They forget that 140-crore citizens are *Modi ka Parivar* [Modi's family]," said the Prime Minister after inaugurating and laying foundation stone for multiple developmental projects worth over ₹34,700 crore across the State.

The Prime Minister inaugurated the Azamgarh, Shravasti, Chitrakoot, and Aligarh airports and a new terminal of the Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport in Lucknow, as well as over 5,342 km of roads built across 59 districts under the PM Gram Sadak Yojna at a cost of ₹3,700 crore. He laid foundation stone of 12 railway projects worth ₹8,200 crore, among others.

Rail against: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Azamgarh on Sunday. ANI

Mr. Modi lashed out at the Opposition Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) for dismissing the development projects launched by him in recent days as "poll gimmick". "In 2024, no one should see these through the lens of the upcoming election. We are embarking on a journey of development. I am aiming to make the country a developed nation by 2047," added the PM. While earlier regimes forced farmers to struggle for every penny, the BJP government has "cleared dues worth thousands of crores for sugarcane farmers of Uttar Pradesh", he stressed.

Purvanchal focus

On the development push in Purvanchal (Eastern U.P.), the PM said the region once known for crime and extremism has seen "accelerated development in the last seven years under the leadership of Yogi *ji* [Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath], along with emphasis on rule of law".

The PM called on the voters of Azamgarh, considered a bastion of the Opposition Samajwadi Party (SP), to not lag behind this time in helping the BJP to cross the 400-seat target in the upcoming election. "That's why I have come here. *Abki baar 400 paar* [let's cross 400 seats]," exhorted the PM.

Mr. Modi visit to Azamgarh, a Lok Sabha seat having a sizeable Muslim and Yadav electorate, is seen as significant amid the BJP's attempt to make inroads in a challenging region. In the 2019 general election, the BJP lost Azamgarh and three neighbouring parliamentary seats and in the 2022 Assembly election, it lost all 10 seats.

The Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat was a SP bastion for a better part of the last three decades. SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and present president Akhilesh Yadav had represented the Muslim-Yadav dominated constituency in the past. In the 2022 parliamentary byelection necessitated by the resignation of Mr. Yadav, BJP's Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua' won a closely fought contest by a mere 8,000-odd votes.

Centre ensures place for Madiga member in Scheduled Caste panel

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

The Madiga community has argued that it is routinely crowded out of benefits

With the Lok Sabha election around the corner, the Union government has chosen to constitute the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) by ensuring the presence of at least one member from the Madiga community, which has a large presence in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

The Ministry of Social Justice notified the appointees of their new positions through a letter on Saturday. BJP Gujarat spokesperson Kishor Makwana has been appointed the next NCSC Chairperson, while Vadepally Ramchander of Peddapalli district in Telangana and Love Kush Kumar of Bijnor district in Uttar Pradesh have been appointed members.

Mr. Ramchander's appointment comes soon after the government formed an internal committee for sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes in response to the decades-long demand of the Madiga community in the two States.

The Madiga community has argued that despite being among the most populous of the SCs, it is routinely crowded out of benefits and reservation by the relatively dominant Mala community.

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised to look into the issue during an election rally last year, the government constituted a committee to look into the sub-categorisation demand for the benefit of all such communities that found themselves to be the most backward among the SCs.

While the Supreme Court is yet to decide on whether SC quotas can be sub-categorised, the committee is looking into ways of targeting benefits towards this section of the Scheduled Castes.

Mr. Ramchander has previously been the district president of the BJP in Peddapalli and has also worked with the Sangh Parivar.

The new appointments to the NCSC come after the terms of member Anju Bala and Acting Chairperson Arun Halder came to an end in February. In July last year, the erstwhile Chairperson of the commission, Vijay Sampla had quit citing personal reasons.

ED sleuths arrest close aide of Lalu in sand mining case

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Subhash Yadav has been arrested on Sunday by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in an alleged illegal sand mining case.

Mr. Yadav, who is a close aide of party supremo Lalu Prasad, was arrested after a daylong raid conducted by the Central agency on Saturday at six locations linked with him. After appearing before the special court, he was sent to judicial custody.

During the search, the ED said it had recovered ₹2 crore in cash and documents more than ₹2.3 crore. Sources said that other documents revealing information on "huge illegal money" have also been seized by the ED.

Mr. Yadav is the director of Broadsons Limited Company. Searches were conducted at his Nariyal Ghat residence apart from properties in Nasriganj, Shahpur, Yaduvanshi Nagar, Maner, Gola Roa and Boring Canal Road in Patna.

The case has been registered against him under Prevention of Money Laundering Act in which he has been charged with undertaking illegal mining and sale of sand.

Case against Himachal MLA, Cong. rebel's father

Press Trust of India
SHIMLA

The Himachal Pradesh Police on Sunday registered a case against an Independent MLA and the father of a Congress rebel and others over "electoral offences" related to the recent Rajya Sabha elections in which six party MLAs voted for the BJP candidate from the State.

The case against MLA Ashish Sharma and now-disqualified MLA Chetanya Sharma's father and others was registered on basis of a complaint lodged by Congress MLAs Sanjay Avasthi and Bhuvneshwar Gaur.

CPI parts ways with Opposition bloc in Jharkhand, to go solo

Press Trust of India
RANCHI

The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Sunday parted ways with the Opposition bloc INDIA, announcing that it will contest in eight of the 14 Lok Sabha seats in the upcoming elections.

The CPI has no representation in the Lower House of Parliament from Jharkhand.

"We have decided to contest the Lok Sabha polls on our own," CPI State secretary Mahendra Pathak said. "The BJP has announced its candidates, but the Congress and the 'Mahagathbandhan' have not yet held any talks on seat-sharing. So, we have decided to go solo," he added. The decision was taken at the party's State executive committee meeting here, said Mr. Pathak.

The CPI will field its candidates in Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Koderma, Chatra, Palamu, Giridih, Dumka and Jamshedpur Lok Sabha constituencies.

Names of the candidates will be announced after March 16, Mr. Pathak said.

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha said such a decision by the CPI State unit raises questions over discipline within the party.

Resolution for candidature from 'Gandhi' family passed

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh unit of the Congress on Sunday unanimously passed a resolution for the candidature from the 'Gandhi' family in Amethi and Rae bareli seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. The Congress Pradesh Election Committee (PEC) refrained from officially naming candidate but sources said the push is for Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Vadra.

"The PEC met today and discussed candidates in each of the 17 LS seats," Anil Yadav, U.P. Congress general secretary said.

BJP distances itself from MP Anant Hegde's remarks on Constitution

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday distanced itself from Karnataka MP Anantkumar Hegde's statement urging voters to give a two-thirds majority to the BJP to effect changes in the Constitution. The party also sought a clarification from Mr. Hegde.

BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said, "It is imperative that it is made clear that the statement reflects his personal views and is not a statement that reflects the view of the BJP. The party has also asked for clarification from him," Mr. Bhatia said.

Mr. Hegde's statement, made publicly in Karnataka, accused the Congress of having made changes to the Constitution "that brought laws to oppress the entire Hindu society", and later linked the call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for 400 seats for the NDA in the Lok Sabha election to effect changes in the Constitution.

These remarks set off a flurry of condemnation from Opposition parties, with both Congress president Mallikarjuna Kharge and Rahul Gandhi speaking out against it. Mr. Gandhi said Mr. Hegde's statement reflected the "hidden agenda" of the RSS.

In a post on X, Mr. Kharge said the Modi government, the BJP and the RSS secretly desired to impose a dictatorship, whereby they would impose their "Manuvaadi mindset" on the people of India and snatch away the rights of the SCs, the STs and the OBCs.

Panel, headed by PM, likely to appoint new ECs by March 15

With the announcement of 2024 Lok Sabha election expected to be made any day after March 13, the government is keen to speed up the appointment and fill the vacancies in the next few days

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

Hasty process: Both the Election Commissioners would be appointed under a new law that was passed in December. PTI

The two vacancies in the Election Commission (EC), created by the surprise resignation of Arun Goel and the retirement of Anup Chandra Pandey, are likely to be filled by March 15, sources indicated on Sunday.

A high-level selection committee, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising a Union Minister and the Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, is likely to meet on March 14.

Earlier, the selection committee was scheduled to meet on March 15 to fill the vacancy of Mr. Pandey, who retired on February 14. However, after the sudden resignation of Mr. Goel, the EC is left with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar as the sole member.

Keen to fill up the vacancies at the earliest, sources told *The Hindu* that the Opposition leader has been sounded out about a change of date to advance the meeting date by a day or two.

"Election Commission or Election OMISSION? India now has only ONE Election Commissioner, even as Lok Sabha elections are to be announced in few days. Why? As I have said earlier, if we do NOT stop the systematic decimation of our independent institutions, our DEMOCRACY shall be usurped by DICTATORSHIP!" Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had asked in a post on X on Saturday.

With the announcement of Lok Sabha election expected to be made any day after March 13, the government is keen to speed up the appointment process in the next few days.

Shortlisting of names

Before the selection panel finalises the names of the commissioners, a search committee under Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal will prepare a shortlist of five names for each post.

The search committee includes the Union Home Secretary and the Secretary, Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

The Election Commissioners will be appointed by the President.

Both the Election Commissioners would be appointed under a new law that was passed by Parliament during the Winter Session in December.

Opposition parties had opposed the Bill on the ground that the poll panel could lose its autonomous character.

Two heads better than one, said SC on CEC's solitary vigil

NEWS ANALYSIS

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar is in sole charge of the Election Commission (EC) with the resignation of Election Commissioner Arun Goel ahead of the Lok Sabha polls' announcement, and the Supreme Court has said that it is ill-advised to leave an institution with such vast, exclusive and uncontrolled powers in the hands of one person, however wise he or she may be.

"There is no doubt that two heads are better than one, and particularly when an institution like the EC is entrusted with vital functions, and is armed with exclusive uncontrolled powers to execute them, it is both necessary and desirable that the powers are not exercised by one individual, however, all-wise he may be," a Division Bench of the SC observed in a judgment in 1991.

The Supreme Court, in *S.S. Dhanoa vs Union of India*, said one person at the helm of the powerful poll body was against the "tenets of democratic rule".

"A single individual may sometimes prove capable of withstanding all the pulls and pressures. However, when vast powers are exercised by an institution which is accountable to none, it is politic to entrust its affairs to more hands than one. It helps to assure judiciousness and want of arbitrariness," the top court reasoned.

Seshan case verdict

However, four years later, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, in the *T.N. Seshan* case judgment, rather muddied the water with a single quizzical line.

The line in the judgment read that the EC could either be a single-member body or a multi-member body. The discretion was that of the President.

"The EC can therefore be a single-member body or a multi-member body if the President considers it necessary to appoint one or more Election Commissioners," the five-judge Bench had mentioned.

The Constitution Bench was interpreting clause 2 of Article 324, which said "the Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other Election Commissioners, if any, as the President may from time-to-time fix..."

But the Bench goes on to agree with the *S.S. Dhanoa* judgment that a multi-member Election Commission was perfectly in tune with the plain language of Article 324 (superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission).

Alliance with Trinamool still possible: Kharge

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday said an alliance with the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal is possible until withdrawal of nominations but asserted that any agreement has to be finalised through negotiations and not unilateral announcements.

"Our doors are always open and an alliance can happen anytime before withdrawal," Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said soon after Trinamool supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced names for all 42 Lok Sabha seats in the State.

However, West Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury lashed out at the Trinamool after the ruling party in Bengal fielded cricketer Yusuf Pathan from his [Mr. Chowdhury] constituency of Berhampore.

Mr. Chowdhury said Ms. Banerjee was worried about facing the ED and the CBI and that is why she sent a message to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

"So, by distancing herself from the INDIA alliance, Mamata Banerjee is sending a message to Modi's office: Don't be upset with me, I am not part of the alliance and I won't compete with the BJP," Mr. Chowdhury said, adding that the Trinamool chief wanted him defeated even at the cost of making the BJP win his seat.

In a post on X, party general secretary Jairam Ramesh also said that the Congress had repeatedly declared its desire to have a respectable seat-sharing agreement with the Trinamool in West Bengal. "The Indian National Congress has always maintained that such an agreement has to be finalised through negotiations and not by unilateral announcements. The Congress has always wanted the INDIA group to fight the BJP together," Mr. Ramesh said.

The Trinamool fielded Mukul Sangma, former Meghalaya Chief Minister who quit the Congress to join Trinamool a few years ago, to respond to the charge of taking unilateral decisions. Mr. Sangma pointed out that the Congress too named candidates for the two Lok Sabha seats from Meghalaya when the Trinamool had asked for the Tura seat.

Hisar MP quits BJP to join Congress

Ashok Kumar
GURUGRAM

Bharatiya Janata Party's Hisar Lok Sabha member Brijendra Singh on Sunday quit the party due to "compelling political reasons" and joined the Congress within a few hours. He later also resigned as the Lok Sabha member.

Formally joining the Congress, Mr. Singh said that he took the decision to quit the BJP as he was "uncomfortable" and "not in agreement" over a few issues, including the farmers movement, the Agniveer scheme and the wrestlers protest.

His resignation came amid the speculations of a possible alliance between the BJP and Jannayak Janta Party for the forthcoming Lok Sabha election.

My alliance is only with the people of Bihar: Chirag Paswan

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Chirag Paswan

Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) president and Jamui Lok Sabha MP Chirag Paswan on Sunday indirectly cautioned the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), saying his alliance was only with the people of Bihar.

Sensing that his party might get fewer seats for the Lok Sabha election this time compared with 2019 following the return of the Janata Dal(U) in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), Mr. Paswan said he would not bow down to anyone. "Chirag Paswan has no greed for power. My ideology and my principle is only dedicated to the people of Bihar. As far as alliance is concerned, my alliance is only with the people of Bihar," Mr. Paswan said during the Jan Ashirwad Mahasabha organised in Vaishali district.

Without naming anyone, Mr. Paswan took a dig at the earlier government in the State alleging that the problems in Bihar continued to persist.

'Lagging behind'

"Many governments have come and gone, many alliances have been formed and broken. Many leaders have come but they all have looted Bihar. Many promises have been made by the leaders but in reality, Bihar is still lagging behind. Every passing day, Bihar is inching towards destruction," Mr. Paswan said to the cheering crowd shouting slogans in his support.

Referring to the problem of migration, he said people were going out of the State for better jobs and education. He said people wanted good education and good health infrastructure in their own district, block, and village.

"This is election time. Think whether the leaders have fulfilled their promises. If not, then why to vote for them again. We need to identify those leaders who have made promises but never fulfilled them," Mr. Paswan said.

He alleged that some people were trying to divide the society on the basis of caste and religion.

Through this rally, Mr. Paswan has indirectly staked claim to the Hajipur seat, which he has been demanding for long. The current MP is his uncle and Union Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras of the Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party.

Mr. Paras has been saying that he would contest from Hajipur and no other person can stake a claim to this seat.

Mr. Paswan's father, the late Ram Vilas Paswan, representedHajipur seat eight times since his first win in 1977.

Learn from Rahul on how to handle ED's pressure, says Ashok Gehlot

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

As more Congress leaders from Rajasthan, including former Ministers Rajendra Yadav and Lal Chand Kataria, joined the BJP on Sunday, former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said people were leaving because of pressure from Central agencies and asked those who were bowing down to pressure to learn from Rahul Gandhi.

Mr. Gehlot said on X that people were saying that they were facing pressure from the Central agencies, therefore they were leaving the Congress and joining the BJP. He added that the Congress had nurtured these leaders and made them Ministers and appointed them to big positions within the party, but they chose to run away at a difficult time.

Taking inspiration

Mr. Gehlot asked them to learn from the Gandhi family.

"We should take inspiration from the Gandhi family. Mr. Rahul Gandhi and his entire family were harassed by the ED for many days on the pretext of questioning, his Parliament membership was cancelled, but he is facing every pressure strongly. Through Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, he is travelling across the country and creating public awareness against injustice, inflation, hatred and unemployment," he said.

कार्यालय, राजस्थान राज्य राजमार्ग प्राधिकरण, जयपुर, राजस्थान सरकार

क्र:एफ.7(17)/आरएसएचए/डब्ल्यूबी/ट्रैच-1/आईटीएस/2023-24/डी-960 दिनांक 07.03.2024

निविदा सूचना संख्या 57/2023-24

राज्य राजमार्गों के इंजीनियरिंग डिजाइन, सप्लाई, इन्स्टोलेशन, टेस्टिंग, कमेनसिनिंग ऑफ इनटेलिजेन्ट ट्रांसपोर्टेशन सिस्टम (आईटीएस), ऑपरेशन मेनटेनेंस के सहित फोर 566 किमी. लम्बाई (5 पैकेज) के कार्य हेतु इच्छुक निविदा दिनांक 09.04.2024 समय प्रातः 11.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित अन्य विवरण वेबसाईट https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है। कार्य की कुल अनुमानित लागत रू. 22.60 करोड़ है।

UBN No. PWD2324GLOB216071 (बी.एल. धनखड़)
DIPR/C/2727/2024 राजस्थान राज्य राजमार्ग, प्राधिकरण, जयपुर

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता, जन स्वा अभि विभाग, क्षेत्र बीकानेर

क्रमांक: अति/बी/अंके /23-24/ 7591-7620 दिनांक : 6-3-2024

ई-बोली सूचना संख्या अमुअ / बी / 2023-24/19-21

राजस्थान के राज्यपाल की ओर से निम्न हस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिक विभाग एवं अन्य विभागों में सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नानुसार ई-बोली द्वारा बोली आमंत्रित की जाती है। बोली प्रपत्र वेबसाईट www.phedwater.rajasthan.gov.in, www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, http:/eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर निम्नानुसार उपलब्ध है। इस निविदा सूचना संख्या अमुअ / बी / 2023-24 / 19-21 में कुल 03 कार्य है, जिनकी कुल अनुमानित लागत रू. 964.80 लाख है।

क्र.सं.	निविदा संख्या	ऑनलाईन बिड डाउनलोड करना	ऑनलाईन बिड डालना	ऑनलाईन बिड खोलना
01	ACEBI/ 2023-24 /19-21	दिनांक 07.03.2024 प्रातः 09.30 बजे से दिनांक 27.03.2024 सायं 18.00 बजे तक	दिनांक 07.03.2024 प्रातः 09.30 बजे से दिनांक 27.03.2024 सायं 18.00 बजे तक	28.03.2024 प्रातः 11.30 बजे

इन निविदाओं के एसपीपीपी पोर्टल पर यूबीएन नम्बर क्रमशः PHE2324WSOB14934, PHE2324WSOB14935, PHE2324WSOB14937

(राजेश पुरोहित)
अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता
DIPR/C/2714/24 जन स्वा. अभि. विभाग क्षेत्र बीकानेर

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता, जन स्वा. अभि. विभाग, जयपुर क्षेत्र- द्वितीय, गांधी नगर, जयपुर

ई-मेलः ace.region2jaipur@yahoo.com फोन नं.: 0141-2702700
क्रमांकः अ.मु.अ.क्षे-2/2023-24/22876-897 दिनांकः 06.03.2024

निविदा सूचना

राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से "Work of O&M of WSS of Pratap Nagar Sector No. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 & 76 on private contract basis for 5 year under Sub Div-XII (South) Jaipur under Jurisdiction of City Div- IV (South) Jaipur" कार्य हेतु जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी विभाग एवं राज्य सरकार/ केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों/ केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग/ डाक एवं दूरसंचार विभाग/रेलवे इत्यादि में उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत संवेदकों से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई-प्रोक्यूरमेंट प्रक्रिया द्वारा निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती है। विस्तृत निविदा एवं निविदा प्रपत्र www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in एवं www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर उपलब्ध है।

क्रम संख्या	एन.आई.बी	यु.बी.एन कोड	निविदा संख्या
1	PHE2324A6198	PHE2324AWLOB14880	134/2023-24

(अमिताभ शर्मा) अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियता
DIPR/C/2589/2024 जन स्वा. अभि. विभाग जयपुर क्षेत्र- द्वितीय, जयपुर

कार्यालय नगर निगम, कोटा दक्षिण (राज0)

क्रमांकः- .ननिको(द)/जन.स्वा./2024/237–49 दिनांकः- 05.03.2024

: ई-निविदा संशोधन सूचना :

"Comprehensive Operation and Maintenance of 1 set of Transfer Station equipment each set accommodating 2 no. Static Compactor, 6 nos. 20 Cum. containers and 3 no. Hook loaders installed under Kota Municipal Corporation – South" की ई–निविदा पद्धति से निविदा क्रमांक 30505–17 दिनांक 23.02.2024 द्वारा ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की गई थी। इस कार्य तिथि में निम्नानुसार संशोधन किया जाता है जिसकी सूचना निगम की वेबसाईट https://urban.rajasthan.gov.in/nnks, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है।

क्र.सं.	विवरण	पूर्व तिथि	संशोधित तिथि
1.	Date and time of downloading of document	24.02.2024 से 15.03.2024 तक (सांय 06 बजे तक)	24.02.2024 से 20.03.2024 तक (सांय 06 बजे तक)
2.	Date and time of online submission of bid document	24.02.2024 से 15.03.2024 तक (सांय 06 बजे तक)	24.02.2024 से 20.03.2024 तक (सांय 06 बजे तक)
3.	Last date of submission of DD for tender fees, Processing feesand EMD in office of Municipal Corporation KotaSouth	15.03.2024 (प्रातः 10:00 बजे से दोपहर 03:00 बजे तक)	20.03.2024 (प्रातः 10:00 बजे से दोपहर 03:00 बजे तक)
4.	Date and time of technical bid opening	16.03.2024 (सांय 04:30 बजे)	21.03.2024 (सांय 04:30 बजे)

आयुक्त
राज.संवाद/सी/23/14549 नगर निगम कोटा दक्षिण

NMDC Ltd.
(A Govt. of India Enterprise) (ISO 9001 Company)
Bailadila Iron Ore Mines, Bacheli Complex
Bacheli, Distt. - South Bastar (Dantewada), CG - 494553
Phone No.: 07857-230210, Mob.: 8085559082

// e-Tender Notice //

BIOM/BC/Contracts/Publication/2023-24/080/ Date: 11.03.2024

Bailadila Iron Ore Mines, Bacheli Complex, NMDC Ltd. invites e-bids for the following works. Intending tenderers may visit and download Tender Documents from CPP Portal or www.nmdc.co.in or http://www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc/. Any corrigendum/addedum to be issued, the bidder must visit the online protal from time to time to notice the same. Corrigendum/addedum will not be published in any newspaper.The offer has to be submitted online at the given MSTC portal only till 03:30 PM and will be opened on 04:00 PM on respective last dates.

MSTC Ref. No. NMDC/ Bacheli/23-24/ ET/		NMDC Tender No. BIOM/BC/ CONTRACTS/ OTE(80)/23-24/	Short Description of Work	EMD (Rs.)	Last Date of Sub'n
1	315/888	C-340	Miscellaneous Cement Concrete approach road works towards and area development below Conveyor 1060 at Loading Plant Premises, BIOM Bacheli Complex	20,300/-	11-04-2024
2	316/893	C-327	Improvement of the Existing road with laying WBM & Bituminous carpeting at weigh bridge no.2 (WB-2) at BIOM Bacheli Complex	35,800/-	11-04-2024
3	317/894	C-325	Construction of additional Pathology Lab above Existing Pathology Department at NMDC Apollo Hospital Bacheli Electrification work	76,600/-	11-04-2024
4	318/895	C-247	Structural steel painting of Conveyor gallery, trestels from JH-2 to JH-3 and junction house-3, BIOM Bacheli Complex	81,800/-	12-04-2024
5	319/896	C-338	Construction of buttress wall at Dep-11A Eastern side slope at 1128RL near opening of 1140MB to arrest rolling boulder	21,200/-	12-04-2024
6	320/897	C-341	Improvement of the existing WBM road with laying of Bituminous carpeting for brake testing of HMVs & LMVs, Bacheli Complex	18,400/-	12-04-2024
7	321/898	C-343	Face lifting works of Barracks, building and misc. civil repairing work at CISF campus, BIOM Bacheli Complex	18,600/-	13-04-2024
8	322/899	C-344	Repair of dozer shed including development of parking space and store room at FOD area at BIOM Bacheli Complex	26,800/-	13-04-2024
9	323/902	C-339	Civil related works Pertaining to Crushing Plant(E) at Deposit. No.05, BIOM Bacheli complex	29,000/-	13-04-2024

HOD (M&S and Contracts)
BIOM, Bacheli Complex

जवाहरलाल नेहरू उन्नत वैज्ञानिक अनुसंधान केंद्र (ज.ने.उ.वै.अ.के.)
(विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग, भारत सरकार के अधीन एक स्वायत्त संस्था सम विश्व विद्यालय संस्था)
Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)
(An Autonomous Institute under Dept. of Science & Technology, Govt. of India
An Institution Deemed-to-be University)

Advertisement No- JNC/AO/No.03/2024 11 March 2024

ADMISSION TO POSTGRADUATE AND RESEARCH PROGRAMMES – 2024-25

JNCASR invites online applications for admission to the following degree programmes:

Research Programmes [Ph.D./MS(Engg.)/MS(Research)] in Sciences and Engineering from candidates with M.Sc. or equivalent, BE/B.Tech/BS (4 year) or equivalent or ME/M.Tech. or equivalent or B.V.Sc./M.V.Sc. or MBBS/M.D. as applicable to individual Units. Candidates should have at least 55% marks in their highest University examination and should also have qualified in any one of the National exams: GATE/JEST/GPAT/UGC-JRF/CSIR-JRF/ICMR-JRF/DBT-JRF/ INSPIRE-JRF.

Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Chemistry with an option to specialize in Materials Chemistry or Chemical Biology or Energy. Applicants possessing a minimum of 55% marks at the Bachelor's degree in any branch of Science with Chemistry as one of the major subject are eligible to apply.

Master of Science (M.Sc.) Inter-Disciplinary Biosciences with an option to specialize in Epigenetics and Diseases, Neurosciences, Human Disease Genetics, or Chemical Biology approach to understanding Disease Biology and Drug discovery. Applicants possessing a minimum of 55% marks at the Bachelor's degree in any branch of Biological Science with Chemistry as a significant subject and who have qualified for the Joint Admissions Test for Masters (JAM) 2024 and/or equivalent examination are eligible to apply.

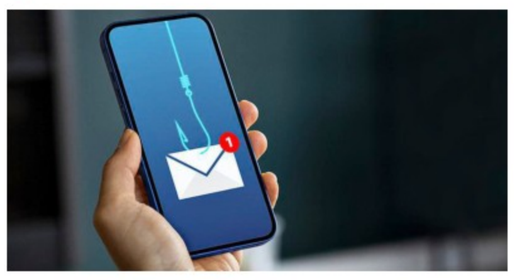
Integrated Ph.D. Programmes in Physical Science, Chemical Science and Biological Science. Candidates should have a minimum of 55% marks at the Bachelor's level. Those appearing in the final examination of their Bachelor's degree this year may also apply. Candidates qualified in the Joint Admissions test for Masters (JAM) 2024 are encouraged to apply.

Post Graduate Diploma in Materials Science Candidates who have completed their M.Sc. in any branch of Science are eligible to apply.

Applicants are advised to visit the website **https://www.jncasr.ac.in/admission/degree-programmes** for detailed information about the programmes, eligibility criteria, etc. The last date for submission of online applications is **15.04.2024**.

Sd/-
Academic Coordinator

INBRIEF



CBDT starts sending alerts to assessees for tax mismatch

The Income Tax (I-T) Department on Sunday said it has started sending emails and SMSs to assessees whose taxes paid during the current fiscal are not commensurate with financial transactions. The department is undertaking an e-campaign, which aims to inform such persons/entities of significant financial transactions urging them to compute their advance tax liability correctly and deposit the due advance tax on or before March 15. In a statement, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said the I-T Department has received information on specific financial transactions undertaken by persons or entities during the 2023-24 financial year. PTI

Cheetah gives birth to 5 cubs at Kuno; count rises to 26

Cheetah 'Gamini' on Sunday gave birth to five cubs at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district, taking the total number of the big cats in the country to 26, Union Minister Bhupender Yadav said. This is the fourth cheetah litter on Indian soil and the first litter of cheetahs brought from South Africa, Mr. Yadav informed. "Congratulations to all, especially the team of forest officers, vets, and field staff who have ensured a stress-free environment for cheetahs...," he stated. PTI

Report turns spotlight on India's 'zero-food children'

A recent study had ranked India as having the third-highest percentage of children who had not eaten any food for 24 hours; experts say rapid urbanisation is fuelling malnutrition in country

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Sunita Gautam, a 26-year-old domestic help, wonders if she will be able to provide her 11-month-old boy the nutrition he requires. "My child is mainly dependent on breastmilk. At times, I give him porridge, but that too not every day as he takes time to eat and is more habituated to breastmilk. I have a very busy daily routine. If I don't earn money, how can I provide a better life for my child?" Ms. Gautam, who works in Lucknow's Vishal Khand area, asked.

Ms. Gautam's baby is likely to be one of the millions of "zero-food children" aged six months to 23 months in Uttar Pradesh. These infants have not eaten any food of substantial calorific content – semi-solid, solid,soft, or mushy food, infant formula or fresh milk – for 24 hours.

A study published recently in the peer-reviewed *JAMA Network Open* journal found the prevalence of zero-food children in India at 19.3%, drawing attention to extreme food deprivation among children. The study ranks India as having the third-highest percentage of zero-food children, above only Guinea (21.8%) and Mali (20.5%). In terms of numbers, India has the highest number of zero-food children at more than six million.

Rapid urbanisation and nuclearised families have contributed to large number of 'zero food children' in Uttar Pradesh. FILE PHOTO

Another study published in 2023 in *eClinical Medicine*, part of the noted *Lancet Discovery Science*, found that Uttar Pradesh alone accounts for 28.4% of zero-food children in India.

"The States of Uttar Pradesh (28.4%), Bihar (14.2%), Maharashtra (7.1%), Rajasthan (6.5%), and Madhya Pradesh (6%) account for nearly two-thirds of the total zero-food children in India," the report said.

"My husband is an alcoholic. He spends most of his time at home but I cannot trust him to feed the child. He may harm the child as it takes time to feed him [the baby]," Ms. Gautam said.

Shalini Singh, a public health specialist, argues that alongside poverty and marginalisation in economic backgrounds, it is rapid urbanisation and nuclearised families that have contributed to such a large number of "zero food children" in India's most populous State.

She said lack of awareness about the nutritional needs of children, and misconceptions, also contribute to the numbers.

"Women from underprivileged economic backgrounds work to sustain their families, resulting in their having insufficient time to complement breastfeeding for children above six months of age. With rapid industrialisation, nuclear families have grown in both urban and rural areas, so there is no one to invest the time and energy required to feed a child, apart from the mother," she said, adding that lack of awareness about nutritional needs of children, and social misconceptions, also contribute to the likely numbers.

Uttar Pradesh's urban population is approximately 23%, according to the 2011 Census and had grown by more than 25% in 2011 when compared with 2001, signifying a large number of poor moving towards urban centres in search of a livelihood.

Other parties make promises, only BJP fulfils them, says PM

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

Narendra Modi

Launching the Mahtari Vandana Yojana, a financial assistance scheme for eligible married women in Chhattisgarh, on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that it was only the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that kept its electoral promises.

"Mothers and sisters, before the elections, many parties make big promises. They promise the stars and the moon, but only a party with a clear intent like the BJP fulfils its promises...," Mr. Modi said.

The Mahtari Vandan Yojana was a pre-poll promise of the BJP in last year's Assembly election campaign. Under the scheme, ₹1,000 per month is given to eligible married women in the State as monthly direct benefit transfer. So far, there have been 70 lakh beneficiaries, and ₹655 crore was transferred on Sunday, as the first instalment under the scheme.

Mr. Modi – who addressed the beneficiaries gathered at the Raipur launch event through videoconferencing - emphasised that a healthy family stems from the well-being of its women. "Our government is committed to ensuring the holistic well-being of every family, and this begins with the health and dignity of the women," he said.

Speaking of some of the other initiatives taken by his government, Mr. Modi said that women were getting pucca houses and Ujjwala gas cylinders in their name.

He added that more than 10 crore women from self-help groups have benefitted during his tenure, while more than one crore women have become *lakhpati didis*. This refers to beneficiaries of a scheme which aims to train women's self-help groups to earn a sustainable income of at least ₹1 lakh per annum by setting up micro-enterprises within their villages.

'Rail roko' protest by farmers affects train services in Punjab

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

Farmers on Sunday squatted on railway tracks at many places in Punjab as part of a 'rail roko' protest called by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha to press the Centre to accept their demands, including a legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP).

Movement of several trains was affected in Punjab on Sunday. The protest was held from 12 noon till 4 pm. The farmers sat on railway tracks at many locations in 22 districts.

According to railway authorities, nine trains were cancelled and many trains were either short-terminated or short-originated.

Farmer leaders Sarwan Singh Pandher and Jagjit Singh Dallewal claimed that their 'rail roko' agitation was successful. "Till a concrete resolution is offered by the government to our demands, we will continue our struggle," Mr. Pandher said.

Besides a legal guarantee of MSP, the farmers are demanding the implementation of the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations, pension for farmers and farm labourers, no hike in electricity tariff, withdrawal of police cases and "justice" for the victims of the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence, reinstatement of the Land Acquisition Act, 2013, and compensation to the families of the farmers who died during a previous agitation in 2020-21.

The protesting farmers from Punjab have been camping at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points since February 13, when security forces stopped them from marching towards Delhi.

7,396 golden langurs in India, reveals survey

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

There are an estimated 7,396 golden langurs in India, the latest survey of the primate has revealed. The comprehensive population estimation of the endangered primate was carried out in two phases by the Primate Research Centre NE India (PRCNE), Assam Forest Department, Bodoland Territorial Council, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), and Conservation Himalayas.

The entire distribution range of the golden langur (*Trachypithecus geei*) covers the Manas Biosphere Reserve and all fragmented forests in the western part of Assam.

In the first phase during March-April 2020, the survey covered the western part of the Manas Biosphere Reserve, including Ripu Reserved Forest – a major part of it was recently upgraded to Raimona National Park - Chirang Reserve Forest, Manas Reserve Forest, and Manas National Park up to the western bank of the Manas River.

Nature's charm: The previous population estimation in 2008-09 recorded 6,000 golden langurs in India. ANI

The second phase during the same months in 2021 focused on fragmented forest habitats of golden langurs in the Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, and Dhubri districts of western Assam. The block count method was applied for the first time to assess the abundance, spatial distribution, and densities of the golden langur populations.

"This method is considered to be relatively simple, cost-effective, and robust for arboreal and small group-living primates such as the golden langur," H.N. Kumara, the principal scientist of SACON, said.

The golden langur habitat was demarcated into 51 counting blocks, each overlaid with 50-hectare grid cells. Ten teams, each comprising one or two trained enumerators and three to four forest staff, surveyed the blocks.

"We observed 7,720 individuals of golden langurs in 706 unique groups and 31 lone males or floating males. Estimating minimum population size, we found there to be 7,396 individuals in 707 groups, inclusive of bisexual and male bands, along with 31 lone males," Jihosuo Biswas, the lead primatologist at PRCNE, said. He supervised the survey.

"The population of golden langurs is divided into two major sub-populations. The northern extended population, which encompasses the western part of the Manas Biosphere Reserve, extending from the Sankosh River to the Manas river up to the India-Bhutan border along the northern side of National Highway 27 and State Highway 2," Dr. Biswas explained.

The northern population of the primate with the golden sheen was estimated at 5,566 in 534 groups and 23 lone males. The population of the southern fragments was estimated at 1,830 langurs in 173 groups and eight lone males.

'Unstable situation'

While the Ripu Reserve Forest was home to the most (2,847) northern population golden langurs, Kokrajhar district's Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuary had 838 individuals, the most in the southern fragmented range of the primate.

The previous population estimation in 2008-09, also conducted under the supervision of Dr. Biswas, recorded 6,000 golden langurs in India. Each group then had has average of 9.24 individuals, which was 1,45 individuals less than the average group recorded in the latest survey.

On the flip side, the survey report underlined an unstable situation in the fragmented habitats of the golden langurs, particularly due to the absence of non-breeding all-male bands. The primatologists involved in the survey highlighted the need for corridor linkage among the fragmented habitats through plantations and canopy bridges to offset potential threats the primates face from anthropogenic interactions.

CISF officer blames online gambling for deaths

Shubhomoy Sikdar
BHILAI

A senior Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officer has flagged online gambling and fraud as new factors pushing personnel to end their lives.

To a question related to mental health and instances of suicides among the personnel, CISF Special Director-General Piyush Anand said in most cases, the reasons behind the suicides were personal and not professional. He added that the force was conducting financial literacy classes to train staff against the possible pitfalls of gambling.

Mr. Anand was addressing a press conference on the occasion of the CISF's 55th Raising Day.

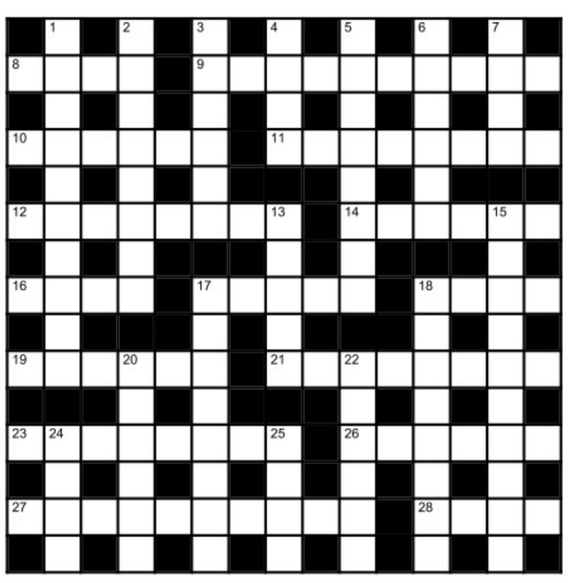
(Those in distress may contact Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline 011-40769002)

TH CROSSWORD + 14119

(set by Incognito)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 Half-back and a couple of students get spherical object (4)
9 Remove part of intestine and unsettle? (10)
10 Activity for summer? Dad prepared gin cocktail! (6)
11 Heavy rainfall! Our pond managed to cover part of wall! (8)
12 Canine's organ of sight also throbbed to some extent (3,5)
14 Republican assistance given back (6)
16 Queen follows American addict, perhaps (4)
17 South African boy's food (5)
18 Erotica removed from notice-board arrangement for getting contract (4)
19 Standard English logo (6)
21 Excitedly Ron slits holes in the head (8)
23 Hates spies going around in German state initially (8)
26 Criminal and vagrants' collection of mug shots? (6)
27 Rich source of oil held wrongly around Eastern Europe (4-6)
28 John's containers (4)

Down

1 Yes, nailed badly around ring saw (4,4,2)
2 Is lector walking around covered walk? (8)
3 After can is thrown from Canada, soldier gets initial order/request to play slowly (6)
4 Current editor performed very well (4)
5 Girl scowled and scowled (8)
6 Quickly buy pans (4,2)
7 Jacob's twin is in Mesa University (4)
13 Dancer from Indian movies twists heel before commencement of night (5)
15 Failing men agitated creator of spy going across at 18 (3,7)
17 Malevolent sibling abducted Indian at one (8)
18 Graduate engineers take taxi back with knight not using saddle (8)
20 Skewer, without using energy, a graceful antelope (6)
22 Disreputable! Carrying new cocktail! (6)
24 Young lady starting to nurse... Not odd! (4)
25 Taste-maker's treaty? (4)

SUDOKU

				3		2	4	
		8		9				7
					4		5	
1		2			7	4	3	
			3		5			
	3	9	6			5		8
	6		1					
2				7		1		
	9	1		5				

No.SS6094 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

■	M	■	D	■	B	■	W	■	D	■
H	O	M	E	■	E	X	I	L	E	■
■	O	■	P	■	T	■	N	■	M	■
I	N	F	A	N	T	■	S	T	E	W
■	■	■	R	■	E	■	T	■	N	■
O	R	A	T	O	R	I	O	■	T	I
■	A	■	E	■	■	■	N	■	I	■
A	N	A	D	E	M	S	■	P	A	S
■	C	■	■	■	E	■	C	■	■	■
S	H	E	R	P	A	■	A	P	P	L
■	■	■	I	■	N	■	P	■	H	■
R	H	E	O	S	T	A	T	■	E	N
■	A	■	T	■	I	■	U	■	N	■
C	I	T	E	■	M	E	R	R	Y	■
■	R	■	D	■	E	■	E	■	L	■

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

1	3	4	6	8	5	7	9	2
8	5	9	7	3	2	4	1	6
7	2	6	4	9	1	5	8	3
6	9	3	2	1	4	8	7	5
2	4	1	5	7	8	3	6	9
5	8	7	3	6	9	1	2	4
9	1	5	8	2	3	6	4	7
4	7	2	1	5	6	9	3	8
3	6	8	9	4	7	2	5	1

FAITH

The paripoorna avatara

In his Peria Thirumozhi, Thirumangai Azhvar has an entire padhigam (set of 10 verses) extolling Lord Narayana's dasavataras, explained M.A. Venkatakrishnan in a discourse. He writes about nine of them in order in nine separate verses, but does not devote a separate verse for Kalki avatara. That is because a padhigam can, by definition, contain only 10 verses, of which the tenth has to be the phala sruti verse. So it would not have been possible to allocate a separate pasuram for Kalki. But Thirumangai Azhvar mentions Kalki in the phala sruti verse. There are three avataras in which the name 'Rama' features. We have the Parasurama and Balarama avataras in addition to Dasaratha Rama.

While talking of Parasurama and Balarama in the phala sruti verse, Thriumangai Azhvar refers to Parasurama and Balarama as 'Rama.' But for Dasaratha Rama, he uses the Tamil word "thAnAi," showing that this Dasaratha Rama was a paripoorna avatara, a complete avatara. The Ramayana is read with reverence, because it tells us about this avatara. We have only two Itihasas – the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Among them, Ramayana is superior, says Pillai Lokachariar. That is because it is entirely about the Lord's avatara, whereas, the Mahabharata is mainly about two warring factions of a family.

DUBAI

Crescent moon spotted in Saudi Arabia, marking start of Ramzan

AP

Officials saw the crescent moon on Sunday night in Saudi Arabia, home to the holiest sites in Islam, marking the start of the holy fasting month of Ramzan for many of the world's 1.8 billion Muslims. Seeing the moon on Sunday night means Monday is the first day of the fast. AP

AMSTERDAM

Protests as Israel President attends Dutch Holocaust Museum opening

AP

Dutch King Willem-Alexander officially opened the country's first Holocaust Museum on Sunday, as demonstrators angry at Israel's military campaign in Gaza protested against Israeli President Isaac Herzog, who also addressed the ceremony. Organisers of the event included those from Jewish groups calling for a Gaza ceasefire. AFP

JAKARTA

Death toll from Indonesia floods, landslip rises to 21, six still missing

REUTERS

The death toll from flash flooding and landslips on the Indonesian island of Sumatra has risen to 21, an official said on Sunday, with six persons still missing. Torrential rains on Thursday triggered the disaster in Pesisir Selatan regency in the West Sumatra province, with more than 75,000 people forced to evacuate. AFP

KATHMANDU

Nepal PM Prachanda to seek third vote of confidence by Wednesday

REUTERS

Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' is planning to seek a vote of confidence in Parliament by Wednesday, days after he forged a new alliance with the CPN-UML. He also expanded his Cabinet for a second time by inducting two new members. With this, the number of Ministers in his Council has reached 22. PTI

Israel-Hamas war rages in Gaza on the eve of Ramzan

A Spanish charity ship with aid intended for the besieged enclave is awaiting clearance in Cyprus; truce talks involving U.S., Qatar and Egyptian mediators fail to find result ahead of fasting month

Agence France-Presse
GAZA STRIP

Deadly fighting raged in Gaza on Sunday between Israeli forces and Hamas militants, with no truce in sight as the Muslim holy month of Ramzan neared and a dire humanitarian crisis gripped the besieged Palestinian territory.

A Spanish charity ship with food aid prepared to sail from the Mediterranean island-nation of Cyprus to help alleviate the suffering in the coastal Gaza Strip, now in its sixth month of war.

The non-governmental group Open Arms said its boat would pull a barge with 200 tonnes of food, which its partner the U.S. charity World Central Kitchen would then unload on the shores of Gaza.

Bright spot: A vendor sells olives and pickles in the Old City of the occupied West Bank city of Hebron on Sunday. AFP

The war started by the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel has killed 31,045 Palestinians, mostly women and children.

Weeks of talks involving U.S., Qatari and Egyptian mediators have aimed for a six-week truce and the release of many of the roughly 100 hostages Hamas is still holding in return for Palestinian prisoners released from Israeli jails.

There have been no result so far.

The widely shared target had been to halt the fighting by the start of Ramzan. Both sides have blamed each other for failing to reach a deal.

Attention during the Muslim fasting month will focus on the al-Aqsa mosque compound in annexed east Jerusalem, a frequent flashpoint in the past as it is both Islam's third holiest site and sacred to Jews who call it the Temple Mount.

Zardari sworn in as Pakistan President for a second time

Press Trust of India
ISLAMABAD

Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday took oath as Pakistan's 14th President, a day after the veteran politician staged a remarkable comeback when he was overwhelmingly elected as the only civilian President of the coup-prone country for a second time.

Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa administered the oath to the 68-year-old Mr. Zardari in a small yet formal ceremony at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the Presidential Palace.

Mr. Zardari replaces Dr. Arif Alvi, who stayed in office for five months after completing his five-year term in September 2023.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir among others.

Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, right, administers the oath of office to Asif Ali Zardari at the Presidential Palace in Islamabad. AP

Separately, a meeting chaired by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif and attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif besides other leaders decided that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) should be approached again with the request to join the federal Cabinet.

Meanwhile, dozens of Pakistan's jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party supporters were arrested on Sunday in different cities of Punjab province for staging "peaceful" protests against alleged rigging in the polls and the "fake election" of the Prime Minister and the President.

Pak.-China ties are a choice of history, says Xi

Press Trust of India
BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sunday congratulated Asif Ali Zardari on his election as Pakistan President, saying that the "ironclad" friendship between the two countries is a "choice of history" and the strategic significance of their ties has become more prominent considering the current changes in the world.

Mr. Xi said that "the two countries have in recent years maintained close high-level exchanges, achieved fruitful results in the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and maintained a high level of development of bilateral relations".

China tightens grip over Internet during key political meeting

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

China has intensified efforts to block software that enables Internet users to access banned websites during a top political meeting this week, a leading provider of firewall-leaping software said.

Beijing operates some of the world's most extensive censorship over the Internet, with web users in mainland China unable to access everything from Google to news websites without using a virtual private network (VPN).

And as thousands of delegates gather in Beijing this week for the annual "Two Sessions" meeting, VPN software has increasingly struggled to circumvent the censorship while outages have become much more frequent, even when compared to during previous sensitive political events.

Increased censorship

"Currently, there is increased censorship due to political meetings in China," a representative of the Liechtenstein-based service Astrill – one of the most popular VPN services for foreigners in China – said. "Unfortunately, not all VPN protocols are functioning at this time," they said.

"We are working intensively on bringing all services back to normal, but currently have no ETA."

U.S. evacuates some embassy staff as Haiti gang violence spikes

Agence France-Presse
PORT-AU-PRINCE

It also brought in additional personnel to boost security at the compound in Port-au-Prince

With Haiti's capital spiraling deeper into gang violence, the U.S. said on Sunday it has airlifted non-essential American staff from its embassy in Port-au-Prince and brought in additional personnel to boost security at the compound.

Residents of beleaguered neighborhoods were scrambling for safety on Saturday following the latest spasm of unrest, with a United Nations group warning of a "city under siege" after armed attackers targeted the presidential palace and police headquarters.

Criminal groups, which already control much of Port-au-Prince as well as roads leading to the rest of the country, have unleashed havoc in recent days as they try to oust Prime Minister Ariel Henry

"This airlift of personnel into and out of the Embassy is consistent with our standard practice for Embassy security augmentation," the statement from the military's U.S. Southern Command added.

The embassy said that it "remains open."

Portugal goes to the polls with the centre-right poised to oust Socialists

Agence France-Presse
LISBON

Voters in Portugal went to the polls on Sunday in an early election that could see the country join a shift to the right across Europe after eight years of Socialist rule.

Final opinion polls published on Friday show the centre-right Democratic Alliance (AD) narrowly ahead of the Socialist Party (PS) but short of an outright majority in parliament, which could make the far-right Chega a kingmaker for forming a governing coalition.

But analysts warned the results of the election, Portugal's second in two years, remained wide open given the large number of undecided voters. Exit poll projections are expected at 8:00 p.m. (0130 IST).

Face of future: Populist right-wing Chega leader André Ventura, casts his ballot at a polling station in Lisbon on Sunday. AP

The AD has campaigned on promises to boost economic growth by cutting taxes, and to improve the country's public services.

The party's leader, 51-year-old lawyer Luis Montenegro, called for a high turnout. He has ruled out any post-election agreement with Chega.

Chega 'legitimate party'

Chega's leader Andre Ventura, a former trainee priest who went on to become a television football commentator, has said his party is "as legitimate as the others".

Chega, which means "Enough", calls for tougher measures to fight corruption, stricter controls over immigration and chemical castration for some sex offenders.

The election was called after Socialist Prime Minister Antonio Costa, 62, unexpectedly resigned in November following an influence-peddling probe.

TO ADVERTISE CONTACT
THE HINDU
Bengaluru: 98455 29981 / 080 - 22071826 / 22071827
Mangaluru: 0824 - 2417575 / 2417580
Mysuru: 94488 71815
Hubballi: 0836 - 2338600 / 2335700
Kalaburagi / Belagavi: 97314 00992

MAHAKUMBH MELA 2025
Department of Urban Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh
through
Prayagraj Mela Pradhikaran, Prayagraj
invites proposals against the following RFPs for Tentage & Temporary structures for MahaKumbh 2025
----------o----------
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Vendors to Provide General Tentage Items for MahaKumbh 2025.
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Vendors to Provide Tin Structures for MahaKumbh 2025.
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Vendors to Provide Furniture Items for MahaKumbh 2025.
- Request for Proposal for Provision of Temporary Public Accommodation structures for MahaKumbh 2025
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of bidder/s for hiring of tractors, trollies, excavators for land development in Mela area for MahaKumbh 2025
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Vendors to Provide Hangars, Pagodas and other temporary structures for MahaKumbh 2025.

Interested bidders can download the documents from the website https://etender.up.nic.in from 11th March 2024 onwards
Email: pmamahakumbh2025@gmail.com
UPID:205375 www.up.gov.in Dt:10-03-24

READ
SPORTSTAR
EVERY FORTNIGHT.
TO SUBSCRIBE, VISIT
www.thehindugroup.in/subscribe

MAHAKUMBH MELA 2025
Department of Urban Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh
through
Prayagraj Mela Pradhikaran, Prayagraj
invites proposals against the following RFPs for Toilets, Urinals, Liner Bags, Dustbins for MahaKumbh 2025
----------o----------
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Agencies to undertake Renting, Operating and Maintaining FRP toilets (septic tank) in community area for MahaKumbh 2025.
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Agencies to undertake Renting, Operating and Maintaining FRP toilets (soak pit) in community area for MahaKumbh 2025.
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Agencies to undertake Renting, Operating and Maintaining FRP urinals (septic tank) in community area for MahaKumbh 2025.
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Agencies to undertake Renting, Operating and Maintaining Prefabricated steel-based toilets (septic tank) in community area for MahaKumbh 2025.
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Agencies to undertake Renting, Operating and Maintaining Prefabricated steel-based toilets (soak pit) in community area for MahaKumbh 2025.
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Agencies to undertake Renting of Kanath based toilets (with sub structure) in religious camps for MahaKumbh 2025.
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Vendors for Procurement of Liner Bags for disposal of Garbage in Mela area for Mahakumbh 2025.
- Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Vendors for Procurement of Dustbins for disposal of Garbage in Mela area for Mahakumbh 2025.

Interested bidders can download the documents from the website https://etender.up.nic.in from 11th March 2024 onwards
Email: pmamahakumbh2025@gmail.com
UPID:205376 www.up.gov.in Dt:10-03-24

Why the secrecy around nomination?

COVERNOTE

Many investments do not reflect the name of the nominee on the document. Imagine the many situations that this can give rise to, none of them joyful

K. Nitya Kalyani

We have got to a point where we have so many passwords that we can't remember them. We need password managers or at least, a little black book with passwords! Google, meanwhile, is force-moving us to a passkey regime involving fingerprint and face recognition promising to end memory and risk-related ills.

Gone are the days when the daughter-in-law of the family, after an exacting probation period no doubt, was given the key bunch signifying that she is the trustee of family jewels and finances!

Today, we leave behind assets through various legal means like wills, settlement deeds, nominations and such. Many don't get organised enough to do it or die an untimely death, leaving family members grappling with the issue and, frequently, with each other.

This need not be so as such decisions can be recorded on the go as and when investments are made.

Even as there are moves to make us aware of nominations, there are equivocal initiatives from authorities and we saw some of that in the previous instalments of CoverNote. This time around let us look at another dimension of the initiative that negates the intention.

Issues with nomination

Almost all financial investments can be nominated and the nomination registered. Some, and this is puzzling, don't give you an acknowledgment or reference number for the nomination. Moreover, on the face of the instrument, say a passbook or bond, they may state whether a nomination has been made or not. Some even give a registration reference number.

Only some mention the name of the nominee.

There is logic in this because once printed, it reflects a validity, albeit of the status on that day. The point being a nomination can be changed, multiple times even.

Ascertaining nominee

Yet, imagine the runaround to ascertain the nominee of various investments after somebody has passed away.

Why can't the family member who is not nominated but is in possession of the instrument/ information simply suppress it so that, never mind that he isn't going to get the money, he can prevent someone else from getting it!

Some centralisation of such a record would be great. While we wait for simplification and standardisation to solve this pain point, guess we have to maintain a meticulously updated notebook listing investments/ assets and to whom each is nominated. Very retro! But if it works, it works!

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

Right strategy: Overall, responsible credit management is important to handle credit-card debt. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

How to avoid falling into credit-card debt?

Spending too much can be risky, especially if you are unsure of future cash flows; you should be responsible with expenses by making conscious choices about purchases to avoid debt

MANAGING DEBT

Rohit Chhibbar

Credit cards, if not used responsibly, can easily and quickly lead to a debt spiral. Not paying credit-card outstanding can become financially draining, as you keep accumulating interest on the balance as well as new purchases, making credit-card debt larger with each day.

While unforeseen emergencies can sometimes lead to unmanageable debt, in many cases overspending and irresponsible usage lead to such an insurmountable debt. Hence, it is important to manage credit cards wisely. Here are some ways to avoid credit-card debt.

Affordable purchases

Credit cards, with 40-to-50-day interest-free period, offer you the convenience of buying now and paying later. However, what comes with this benefit is the temptation to overspend. Spending too much can be risky, especially if you are unsure of future cash flow. You should be responsible with expenses by making conscious choices about purchases to avoid falling into debt. Prioritise needs over wants Avoid using the card for impulse purchases or luxuries beyond means.

Pay bills on time

Missed or late payments are one of the primary reasons why people fall into credit-card debt. When you miss payments, credit card issuers levy high interest rates and late fees, which can quickly accumulate. Furthermore, paying only the minimum amount due every month is also not advisable. It means carrying the balance month to month and accumulating interest charges on the balance as well as on any new purchases. Paying the entire balance each month on time is the best way to avoid credit card debt.

> Missed or late payments are one of the primary reasons why people fall into credit-card debt; when you miss payments, issuers levy high interest rates, fees

Avoid cash withdrawal

Credit cards also give the facility to withdraw cash from an ATM, up to a limit. However, cash withdrawals from credit cards can quickly lead to debt for two reasons.

One, cash withdrawals do not qualify for the interest-free period, which means interest will be applicable from the day of withdrawal. And, two, when you withdraw cash, new transactions become ineligible for the interest-free period, which means you will incur interest charges with each purchase Cash withdrawals can quickly lead to debt accumulation and, hence, must be avoided.

> When you have multiple cards with varied billing cycles, you can plan expenses to optimally use interest-free period; use a card offering more interest-free days

Credit cards can offer an interest-free period of up to 50 days. When you have multiple cards with varied billing cycles, you can plan expenses to make optimum use of the interest-free period. The purchases you make at the beginning of the billing cycle would get more interest-free days as opposed to those made later. Hence, when you have to make a big-ticket purchase, you can use a card that offers more interest-free days. This will help manage monthly cash flow with ease and avoid debt.

EMI facility

Many credit cards offer Equated Monthly Instalment (EMI) options for big-ticket purchases. When facing difficulty making an expensive purchase, you can choose the EMI option and repay the amount in manageable instalments. Additionally, if you have already made such a purchase and are struggling to pay the credit-card bill, you can convert the outstanding balance into EMIs by contacting the card issuer. Opting for EMIs allows you to pay a larger chunk of debt in smaller and more affordable amounts. However, before opting for the option, check the interest rate, processing fee and related charges.

Limit number of cards

Managing multiple accounts or payments could lead to missed payments and debt accumulation. Also, with each additional card, the temptation to overspend increases, eventually leading to the accumulation of charges and card debt. Also, there are higher chances of losing track of spends and payments. Therefore, limit the number of cards you have to what you can manage.

Review statement

You should regularly check credit-card statements; it will help you understand spending pattern and the categories on which you spend the most. Sometimes, wrong debits can also raise card dues, which should be rectified at the earliest. Regularly reviewing your statements will help manage cards smartly and avoid falling in debt.

Overall, responsible credit management is important to handle such debt.

By implementing practices such as creating a realistic budget, monitoring financial health and paying bills on time and smartly, you can effectively manage finances without debt burden. For those already struggling with debt, balance transfer at a lower interest rate or a personal loan can be an approach to clear the debt burden.

(The writer is Head of Credit Cards Business, Paisabazaar)

Discerning side pocket

THINKINVESTOR

In 2018, SEBI allowed bond funds to move corporate bonds to a distinct account if the bonds held by them did not pay timely interest or suffered credit downgrade; this account is 'side pocket'

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Recently, an asset management company (AMC) sent a notice to unit holders of one of its funds mentioning the fund was creating a provision for a segregated portfolio. Such a portfolio is referred to as a side pocket. In this article, we explain a side pocket. We also discuss other risks associated with bond funds and how bank deposits moderate these risks.

Credit risk

To understand segregated portfolio, consider the risks bond funds are exposed to. Investment in government bonds exposes a fund to interest-rate and reinvestment risks. We will ignore reinvestment risk for this discussion. Interest-rate risk is the risk that bond prices will decline when the bond market expects interest rates to rise. In addition, investments in corporate bonds carry credit risk.

This risk is not just about defaults. It includes a rise in investors' perception of the bond-issuer's credit risk, which could lead to a decline in corporate bond prices. A perception that credit risk has risen can arise because of a failure by the company to pay interest on time or a credit-rating downgrade.

In 2018, SEBI allowed bond funds to move corporate bonds to a separate account if the bond held by the funds failed to pay interest on time or suffered a credit downgrade. This separate account is called a segregated portfolio. The concept comes from hedge funds that also invest in private equity. Being an illiquid investment, private equity is kept in a separate account called a side pocket while the main account carried all the liquid investments of the hedge fund. A segregated portfolio is a side pocket.

That said, it is important to understand that investing in bond funds are different from investing in bonds. If you buy a bond and hold it till maturity, you will receive the bond's par value regardless of the interest-rate changes. That means direct investment in bonds does not carry interest-rate risk. Investment in bond funds do.

Conclusion

Bond funds generate returns from interest income and capital appreciation but carry interest-rate risk and reinvestment risk. Bond funds that invest in corporate bonds also carry credit risk.

Investing directly in government bonds eliminates interest-rate risk but exposes you to reinvestment risk. Cumulative fixed deposits and recurring deposits with banks do not have interest risk and reinvestment risk. They carry credit risk, but that risk is lower than what bond funds are exposed to.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
HDFC Bank	10.50 onwards	10,747 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to Rs 4,999
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 5.5%
State Bank of India	11.15-15.30	10,909-11,974	2,182-2,395	1.5% (Rs 1,000-Rs 15,000)
ICICI Bank	10.65 onwards	10,784 onwards	2,157 onwards	Up to 2.50%
Bank of Baroda	11.05-18.75	10,884-12,902	2,177-2,580	Up to 2% (min Rs 1,000 and max Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3%
Bank of India	10.75-14.75	10,809-11,829	2,162-2,366	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 5,000)
Punjab National Bank	10.40-17.95	10,772-12,683	2,144-2,537	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.99-16.00	10,621-12,159	2,124-2,432	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.49 onwards	10,994 onwards	2,199 onwards	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.35-15.45	10,959-12,013	2,192-2,403	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	10.75-13.50	10,809-11,505	2,162-2,301	Up to 1%
South Indian Bank	12.85-20.60	11,338-13,414	2,268-2,683	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	12.45-12.85	11,236-11,338	2,247-2,268	Nil
IDFC First Bank	10.75 onwards	10,809 onwards	2,162 onwards	Up to 3.5%
Bank of Maharashtra	10.00-12.80	10,624-11,325	2,125-2,265	1% (Rs 1,000-Rs 10,000)
Karnataka Bank	13.43	11,487	2,297	Up to 2% of loan amount (Min. Rs 2,500, Max. Rs 8,500)
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 3%

Car Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
Union Bank of India	8.70 - 10.45	10,307 - 10,735	Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.75 - 10.60	10,319 - 10,772	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	8.75 - 12.10	10,319 - 11,148	Up to Rs 2,000
Canara Bank	8.70 - 12.70	10,307 - 11,300	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 5,000)
Bank of India	8.75 - 10.75	10,319 - 10,809	Nil
UCO Bank	8.45 - 10.55	10,246 - 10,759	Nil
State Bank of India	8.75 - 9.80	10,319 - 10,554	Up to Rs 1,500
IDBI Bank	8.80 - 9.60	10,331 - 10,525	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.70 - 13.00	10,307 - 11,377	Nil
Indian Overseas Bank**	8.85 - 12.00	10,343 - 11,122	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	9.10 onwards	10,403 onwards	Rs 999 - Rs 8,500
HDFC Bank	8.75 onwards	10,319 onwards	0.50% (Rs 3,500 - Rs 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	8.88 - 11.36	10,350 - 10,961	0.60% (Rs 3,000 - Rs 11,000)
Federal Bank	8.85 onwards	10,343 onwards	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
South Indian Bank	8.75 onwards	10,319 onwards	1% (Max: Rs 10,000)
IDFC First Bank	9.50 onwards	10,501 onwards	Up to Rs 10,000
City Union Bank	14.35 - 14.85	11,725 - 11,586	1.25% (Min: Rs 1,000)

*0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holders.
**0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 750 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.20% to borrowers for financing Electric 4 Wheelers. 0.20% concession to existing Housing Loan Borrowers.

Rates and charges as on March 6 **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

NOT ANYTIME SOON

I will retire when I feel not good enough to play the sport: Rohit

R.V. MOORTHY

Rohit Sharma opened up on his retirement plans following India's series win against England. "If one day if I wake up and feel I am not good enough to play the sport, I will just talk it out and let them know about it... I feel I am playing the best cricket now," Rohit Sharma said on Jio Cinema.

INTROSPECTION NEEDED

We just get lost with this term Bazball, says Hussain

R.V. MOORTHY

Miffed at England's 4-1 shellacking by India, Nasser Hussain has advised the team's batters to work on individual performances and eschew their obsession with Bazball. "We just get lost with this term Bazball. The team, the management does not like the term and they need to look at their performances," Hussain wrote for Sky Sports.

BEING GENUINE

Vaughan calls for a dose of honesty after England's series loss

R.V. MOORTHY

Michael Vaughan fears not all England players have fully adapted to the existing team culture. "After a humbling series defeat in India, I believe that a dose of honesty is important for this England team... victories are what keep the fun bus on the road, not talking about how much fun you are having," Vaughan wrote for Daily Telegraph.

IPL BECKONS

KKR ropes in Salt after Roy pulls out due to personal reasons

FILE PHOTO

Kolkata Knight Riders has brought in Englishman Phil Salt as a replacement for compatriot Jason Roy who pulled out of the IPL due to personal reasons. This will be Salt's second season in the IPL, having played for Delhi Capitals last season. The 27-year-old has been bought at his reserve price of ₹ 1.5 crore.

Capitals survive Richa's heroics to snatch a thriller against RCB

The Delhi side rides on Jemimah and Capsey's 97-run partnership to post 181; the RCB wicketkeeper-batter's 29-ball 51 just fails to take her team past the finish line as Lanning & Co. prevail by a solitary run; Shreyanka's four-for goes in vain

WPL SEASON 2

Lavanya L
NEW DELHI

In her element: Jemimah's breezy half-century propelled Capitals to a challenging total. R.V. MOORTHY

A superior fielding effort and sheer resilience saw home side Delhi Capitals seal a heart-stopping one-run win against Royal Challengers Bangalore at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Sunday.

Needing 182 to win, RCB lost skipper Smriti Mandhana early. Ellyse Perry and Sophie Molineux's 80-run stand consolidated the chase. A dramatic 11th over saw Alice Capsey first drop Perry at long off. Shikha Pandey and Taniya Bhatia made sure Capsey and DC didn't pay a heavy price, running out the Aussie all-rounder off the last ball of the same over.

After Arundhati Reddy dismissed Molineux, the onus fell on Sophie Devine and Richa Ghosh's shoulders. With 40 needed off the last 18, Marizanne Kapp dismissed Devine off the first ball of the 18th.

It boiled down to Richa with 17 needed off the last over. Richa creamed the ball over Jess Jonassen's head for a six. Disha Kasat was run out with no contribution to the scoreboard off the third ball after Richa's second-ball dot. After a nervy couple of runs, Richa got the maximum over the longest side of boundary to bring up her fifty. With two runs needed off the last ball, Jonassen went full with Richa just managing to get the ball to backward point. Some sharp work from Jonassen saw her first smash the stumps at the non-strikers and do the same at the other end. Review showed Richa well short of the crease, sending DC into the playoffs.

Inconsolable

Richa was inconsolable at the end of it all, with Meg Lanning, Jemimah Rodrigues and others going up to comfort her. "This will sting but the sun will rise tomorrow and she'll get over it," Perry said after the game.

Earlier, Lanning opted to bat with the Capitals starting off cautiously. With the openers falling soon after the PowerPlay, Alice Capsey and Jemimah took over the baton and frustrated the RCB bowlers no end, stitching a 97-run stand which helped the side to a competitive total.

No total is safe at the Kotla, but if there was a team to defend one when the chasing side was going hammer and tongs, it was a fielding side as relentless as Capitals.

SCOREBOARD

DELHI CAPITALS
Meg Lanning lbw b Shreyanka 29 *(26b, 5x4)*, Shafali Verma c Molineux b Asha 23 *(18b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Jemimah Rodrigues b Shreyanka 58 *(36b, 8x4, 1x6)*, Alice Capsey b Shreyanka 48 *(32b, 8x4)*, Marizanne Kapp (not out) 12 *(6b, 1x6)*, Jess Jonassen st Richa b Shreyanka 1 *(2b)*, Radha Yadav (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-1, w-7, nb-1): 9; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 181.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-54 (Shafali, 6.2 overs), 2-60 (Lanning, 7.4), 3-157 (Jemimah, 17.5), 4-176 (Capsey, 19.1), 5-179 (Jonassen, 19.4).

RCB BOWLING
Renuka 3-0-31-0, Shradda 3-0-26-0, Molineux 4-0-45-0, Asha 4-0-29-1, Shreyanka 4-0-26-4, Wareham 2-0-23-0.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS
Smriti Mandhana lbw b Capsey 5 *(7b, 1x4)*, Sophie Molineux c Jemimah b Arundhati 33 *(30b, 5x4)*, Ellyse Perry run out 49 *(32b, 7x4, 1x6)*, Sophie Devine c Arundhati b Kapp 26 *(16b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Richa Ghosh run out 51 *(29b, 4x4, 3x6)*, Georgia Wareham c Radha b Shikha 12 *(6b, 2x4)*, Disha Kasat run out 0 *(0b)*, Shreyanka Patil (not out) 0 *(0b)*; Extras (w-4): 4; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 180.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-9 (Smriti, 1.3), 2-89 (Perry, 10.6), 3-93 (Molineux, 11.5), 4-142 (Devine, 17.1), 5-165 (Wareham, 18.6), 6-172 (Disha, 19.3), 7-180 (Richa, 19.6).

CAPITALS BOWLING
Kapp 4-0-30-1, Capsey 1-0-5-1, Shikha 4-0-34-1, Jonassen 3-0-39-0, Radha 4-0-36-0, Arundhati 3-0-24-1, Titas 1-0-12-0.

Toss: Delhi Capitals.
PoM: Jemimah
Delhi Capitals won by one run.
Monday's match: Gujarat Giants vs. UP Warriorz, 7.30 p.m.

Test cricket is hard, you need each other to succeed: Dravid

Press Trust of India
DHARAMSHALA

India coach Rahul Dravid underlined the importance of staying together and functioning as a unit to be triumphant in the tough world of Test cricket while delivering a motivational dressing room speech after India registered a memorable 4-1 series win over England.

"Series like this have to be earned and this is tough. Test cricket is hard at times. It's hard in terms of your skill. It's hard physically, as you've seen, it's hard mentally," Dravid said in a video posted on BCCI.tv.

"But it's great satisfaction at the end of it. The satisfaction that you get winning a series like this coming from one behind to be able to win four. I think it's just phenomenal," he added.

As key players like Virat Kohli and Mohammed Shami and K.L. Rahul, who played only the opener, were unavailable, India found heroes in some young names in the series.

The Indian coach was a chuffed man after some of those young names emerged in flying colours from the series. "For a lot of you young guys, especially coming into this group, you are going to need each other to succeed. Whether you're a batsman or bowler or whatever you are, your success is tied in with other people's success.

"All of you are invested in each other's success. And that's really important going forward. It's not about your success, but it's about how you can help other people succeed, which will also help you succeed," he said.

India-England Test series in numbers

R.V. MOORTHY

Batting	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg	100s/50s
Jaiswal	9	**712**	214*	89.00	2/3
Gill	9	**452**	110	56.50	2/2
Crawley	10	**407**	79	40.70	0/4
Rohit	9	**400**	131	44.44	2/1
Duckett	10	**343**	153	34.30	1/0

Bowling	Inns	Wkts	BBI	SR	5W
Ashwin	10	**26**	5/51	36.11	2
Hartley	9	**22**	7/62	68.36	1
Bumrah	8	**19**	6/45	32.78	1
Kuldeep	8	**19**	5/72	36.05	1
Jadeja	8	**19**	5/41	46.26	1

Henry and Sears rattle Aussies

Agence France-Presse
CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand's Matt Henry (two for 37) and debutant Ben Sears (two for 22) cleaned out the top four Australian batsmen on Sunday to leave the visitors on 77 for four and facing an uphill task in their chase of 279 to win the second Test in Christchurch.

The scores: New Zealand 162 & 372 in 108.2 overs (Rachin Ravindra 82, Daryl Mitchell 58, Kane Williamson 51, Scott Kuggelejin 44, Cummins 4/62, Lyon 3/49) vs Australia 256 & 77/4 in 24 overs (M. Marsh batting 27).

Bagan brush past EBFC, climb to top of the table

ISL-10

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

Bragging rights retained: East Bengal could not match Mohun Bagan's might. FOCUS SPORTS/ISL

Mohun Bagan SG beat its traditional rival East Bengal by a comfortable 3-1 margin in the return derby of ISL at the Salt Lake Stadium on Sunday, to reach the top of the current standings with 36 points from 17 matches.

East Bengal regretted captain Cleiton Silva's inability to score from the spot in the 14th minute as Bagan goalkeeper Vishal Kaith judged it right to keep EBFC waiting for the break.

Bagan turned things around on its side from this point and doubled its resolve to find the lead in the 27th minute when Jason Cummings tapped home a rebound following a Dimitri Petratos effort that was blocked by the EBFC custodian Prabhsukhan Gill.

Bagan maintained the intensity of the attacks and doubled the lead in the 37th minute when Petratos set up Liston Colaco with a nice pass for the latter to slot home.

MBSG made it 3-0 from an injury-time penalty that was converted by Petratos himself.

This virtually sealed the match for Bagan even though EBFC made a valiant effort after the break and pulled one back through Saul Crespo, who scored a world-class goal in the 53rd minute.

The result:

East Bengal 1 (Saul Crespo 53) lost to Mohun Bagan SG 3 (Jason Cummings 27, Liston Colaco 37, Dimitri Petratos 45+3-pen).

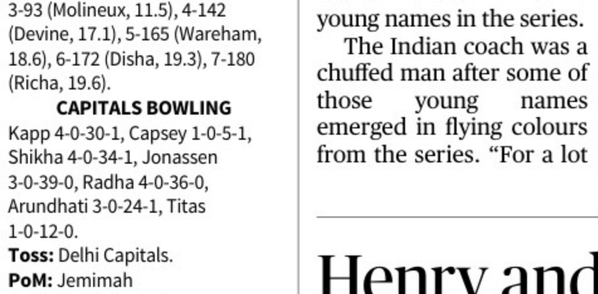
Arsenal stays at the top after Liverpool holds Man City

Agence France-Presse
LIVERPOOL

A thrilling draw at Anfield between Liverpool and Manchester City on Sunday means that Arsenal stays on top of the Premier League after Kai Havertz spared Aaron Ramsdale's blushes with a crucial late strike in Saturday's 2-1 win against Brentford.

John Stones had given City the lead in the first half before Alexis Mac Allister pulled Liverpool level from the spot in the second half. The result leaves Arsenal and Liverpool on 64 points with the Gunners ahead on goal difference. City is third on 63.

Mikel Arteta's side was just minutes away from a damaging draw after Gunners keeper Ramsdale gifted an equaliser to Yoane Wissa. Declan Rice put Arsenal ahead early in the first half, but Ramsdale waited too long to clear just before the interval and Wissa took advantage to block the ball into the net.



Bullet header: Havertz nods home Arsenal's winner. GETTY IMAGES

Havertz ensured Arsenal would not miss its chance to climb into first place with a bullet header.

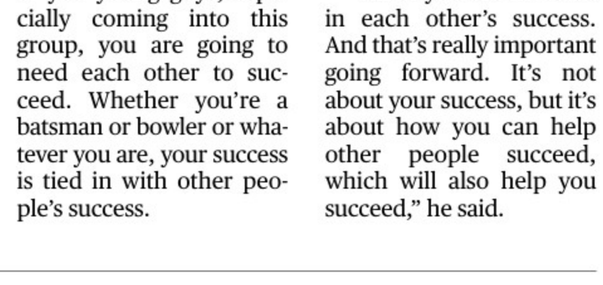
The results: Premier League: Aston Villa 0 lost to Tottenham 4 (Maddison 50, Johnson 53, Son 90+1, Werner 90+4); Brighton 1 (Omobamidele 29-og) bt Nottingham Forest 0; West Ham 2 (Paqueta 46, Ings 90+1) drew with Burnley 2 (Fofana 11, Mavropanos 45+1-og); Liverpool 1 (Mac Allister 50-pen) drew with Man City 1 (Stones 23).

Serie A: AC Milan 1 (Pulisic 40) bt Empoli 0.

On Saturday: Premier League: Arsenal 2 (Rice 19, Havertz 86) bt Brentford 1 (Wissa 45+4).

LaLiga: Girona 2 (Portu 13, Savinho 87) bt Osasuna 0; Granada 2 (Uzuni 21-pen, 45+3) lost to Real Sociedad 3 (Umar 33, Le Normand 80, Silva 85); Cadiz 2 (Juanmi 24, 64) bt Atletico Madrid 0. **Serie A:** Bologna 0 lost to Inter Milan 1 (Bisseck 37)).

Satwik-Chirag pair wins French Open title



Easing past: Satwiksairaj and Chirag beat Chinese Taipei's Lee and Yang in the summit clash. FILE PHOTO

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
PARIS

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty continued their love affair with Paris, lifting the French Open badminton crown for the second time with a dominating straight game win over Chinese Taipei's Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan in the men's doubles final here on Sunday.

The World No. 1 Indian pair had finished runners-up in the French Open in 2019 before winning the title in 2022.

The Asian Games champions outwitted Lee and Yang 21-11, 21-17 in 37 minutes to regain the Super 750 tournament crown and also win their first triumph.

The Indian duo had beaten South Korea's Seo Seung Jae and Kang Min Hyuk 21-13, 21-16 in the semifinals on Saturday.

INBRIEF

Neeraj backs government's talent-spotting programme

Ace Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has backed the government's nationwide sports development initiative 'Kirti', saying it has the potential to bring about big changes in the country's educational ecosystem. The Sports Ministry has launched 'Kirti', a grassroots-level talent-identification programme aimed at school-going children.

Bangladesh downs India, wins SAFF U-16 Women's C'ship

India fell short of a title conquest, losing to Bangladesh 2-3 in the penalty shoot-out during the SAFF U-16 Women's Championship final in Kathmandu on Sunday. Both the teams were tied at 1-1 after the regulation time. Anushka Kumari found the net in the fourth minute for India. Shveta Rani's own goal in the 70th helped Bangladesh get back into the game and eventually clinch the crown.

Rubina and Manish make do with mixed team pistol silver

Rubina Francis and Manish Narwal were beaten to the gold 16-12 by the Chinese duo of Li Min and Yang Chao in the P6 mixed team air pistol event of the WSPS Para shooting World Cup at the Dr. Karni Singh Range here on Sunday.

The results: P6 mixed team air pistol: 1. China (Li Min, Yang Chao) 16 (562); 2. India (Rubina Francis, Manish Narwal) 12 (570 EWR); 3. India-2 (Bhakti Sharma, Rudransh Khandelwal) 16 (559).

R10 mixed team air rifle: 1. China (Zhong Yixin, Dong Chao) 16 (627.9 WR); 2. India-2 (Mona Agarwal, Aadithya Giri) 4 (622.9); 3. Ukraine (Iryna Shchetnik, Andrii Doroshenko) 16 (622.30); 4. India (Avani Lekhara, Swaroop Unhalkar) 4 (619.5).

R11 mixed team air rifle: 1. Brazil (Jessica Michalack, Bruno Kiefer) 16 (622.7); 2. USA (Madison Champion, Ben Hays) 6 (627.4); 3. India (Pavani Banoth, Satya Rayala) 17 (601.0).

LIVE TELECAST

Ranji Trophy: (final), day 2, Jio Cinema App, 9.30 a.m.
PVL: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 6.30 & 8.30 p.m.
WPL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)
LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Shardul's counter-attack bails Mumbai out of troubled waters against Vidarbha

The hosts lose six wickets for 30 runs after a solid opening stand; the all-rounder's 75 helps them to 224 before the visitors slide to 31 for three

RANJI TROPHY

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

The venue may have changed. So did the opposition. But the trend of Mumbai's batting continued in the Ranji Trophy final against Vidarbha. The top-six caved in yet again before the lower order – led by the fearless Shardul Thakur – gave respectability to the total on a day dominated by bowlers.

Had it not been Shardul's counter-attacking 75, Mumbai would have struggled to put on 224 after being inserted in to bat on Day One at the Wankhede Stadium. Him and Dhawal Kulkarni, featuring in his last match for Mumbai as injured Mohit Avasthi's replacement, then left Vidarbha reeling at 31 for three at stumps.

Rescue mission: It was again down to Shardul to save Mumbai's blushes. EMMANUAL YOGINI

The Mumbai essay was a remarkable session of two stints of batters' domination on either side of bowling supremacy. Prithvi Shaw's trademark cover-drives off Umesh Yadav and Bhupen Lalwani's flicks through midwicket were a treat to the eyes as the Sunday crowd built up in anticipation of a run-feast. Yash Thakur, the first-change pacer, struck by jagging one away from Lalwani and forced him into an edge to captain Akshay Wadkar.

The dismissal triggered a collapse as Vidarbha picked six for 30 to leave Mumbai reeling at 111 for six from 81 for no loss.

Harsh Dubey – the left-arm spinner who was brought in place of Akshay Wakhare – struck gold in a long spell having got rid of Prithvi Shaw , Musheer Khan and captain Ajinkya Rahane.

Umesh Yadav found Shreyas Iyer in no-man's land at the crease to be caught-behind. In came Shardul and took the bowlers head on. Tushar Deshpande hung around as the duo's 42-run association helped Mumbai cross the 200-run mark.

The scores: Mumbai — 1st innings: Prithvi Shaw b Dubey 46 *(63b, 5x4)*, Bhupen Lalwani c Wadkar b Thakur 37 *(64b, 4x4)*, Musheer Khan lbw b Dubey 6 *(12b, 1x4)*, Ajinkya Rahane c Shorey b Dubey 7 *(35b)*, Shreyas Iyer c Karun b Umesh 7 *(15b, 1x4)*, Hardik Tamore c Wadkar b Thakare 5 *(41b)*, Shams Mulani lbw b Thakur 13 *(37b, 1x6)*, Shardul Thakur c Dubey b Umesh 75 *(69b, 8x4, 3x6)*, Tanush Kotian c Wadkar b Thakur 8 *(12b, 1x4)*, Tushar Deshpande run out 14 *(34b, 2x4)*, Dhawal Kulkarni (not out) 0 *(7b)*; Extras (b-2, lb-2, nb-2): 6; Total (in 64.3 overs): 224.
Fall of wickets: 1-81 (Lalwani, 19.6 overs), 2-89 (Shaw, 22.2), 3-92 (Musheer, 24.2), 4-99 (Shreyas, 27.5), 5-111 (Tamore, 37.4), 6-111 (Rahane, 38.3), 7-154 (Shams, 47.4), 8-176 (Kotian, 51.4), 9-218 (Deshpande, 62.1).
Vidarbha bowling: Umesh 13.3-2-43-2, Thakare 16-6-36-1, Dubey 20-3-62-3, Thakur 11-2-54-3, Sarvate 4-0-25-0.
Vidarbha — 1st innings: Atharva Taide (batting) 21 *(46b, 2x4)*, Dhruv Shorey lbw b Shardul 0 *(3b)*, Aman Mokhade c Tamore b Kulkarni 8 *(15b, 2x4)*, Karun Nair c Tamore b Kulkarni 0 *(12b)*, Aditya Thakare (batting) 0 *(4b)*; Extras (nb-2): 2; Total (for three wkts. in 13 overs): 31.
Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Shorey, 2.3), 2-20 (Mokhade, 7.2), 3-24 (Karun, 11.3).
Mumbai bowling: Shardul 5-0-14-1, Kulkarni 6-2-9-2, Deshpande 2-0-8-0.
Toss: Vidarbha.

'We are not happy with the total we have put on board'

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Just like he came hard at the Vidarbha bowlers with the willow, Shardul Thakur minced no words at the Mumbai specialist batters after the first day's play of the Ranji Trophy final.

"We are not happy with the total that we have put on board. Certainly with the way we started of, if the top order had applied themselves, had the right attitude and approach, we could have reached 350 or even 370 with five or six wickets down at the end of the day's play," Shardul said.

From 81 for no loss, Mumbai were reduced to 111 for six before Shardul came to the rescue with a 69-ball 75. During an 108-ball boundary-less drought before Shardul's first four, Mumbai lost captain Ajinkya Rahane and Shreyas Iyer, among others.

While Rahane has struggled right through the season with the willow, Shreyas has looked jittery ever since being excluded from the BCCI's central contracts list. Shardul stood right behind the duo.

Rough patch

"It's just a rough patch for them and in a rough patch, nothing goes your way," Shardul said, adding that the duo has been "absolute match winners for Mumbai and India". "It's time to support them rather than criticizing them. They are extremely hard workers. They put in a lot of efforts towards their batting, a lot of thinking towards their batting. And they both of them are absolutely team players."

While he was a tad disappointed at losing out on scoring a second hundred on a trot, Shardul acknowledged veteran coach Vilas Godbole for a batting tip offered ahead of the last week's semifinal.

"The other day at BKC, I was speaking to Vilas Godbole sir and he just made out a couple of fine points at my batting. He said at times you tend to not flex your knees and try to hit the ball. He said the mindset should be to hit the ball but he said you should flex your knees and try to go towards the ball. I did it in the last two games and I am glad it has come off, he said.

Yash Thakur recalls looking up to 'bedrock' Umesh

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

For five years, Yash Thakur has been groomed as Umesh Yadav's understudy. On Sunday, playing his maiden Ranji Trophy final, Yash, the protege, overshadowed the master to help Vidarbha bowl Mumbai out for 224.

Yash, bowling first-change, broke the 81-run opening stand with a fuller one that jagged away to kiss opener Bhupen Lalwani's edge and rested in Akshay Wadkar's gloves. He came back after lunch to break the back of Mumbai's lower-order, dismissing Shams Mulani and Tanush Kotian.

Yash cannot forget the first time he met Umesh, at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Academy in Nagpur during his u-16 days.

Yash Thakur. EMMANUAL YOGINI

"After being selected for a camp, my first day at the VCA Academy, I met Umesh bhaiya in person," Yash had told *The Hindu* earlier in the season. "I was in awe of him and wanted to follow into his footsteps by going on to play for India. But the first big dream was to bowl like him and bowl in tandem with him just once."

While Yash refers to him as a "bedrock" of the Vidarbha unit, more than heaping praise on Umesh, Yash remembers an incident during the first time he bowled along with Umesh, during Vidarbha's Ranji semifinal against Kerala in 2018-19 on a "terrible" pitch at Wayanad.

"We ran through them on the first innings, he was unplayable but I went wicketless," Yash recalled. "He walked up to me, reminded me the game is not over and told me to back myself. It helped and I picked four in the next match. Since then, every time I bowl when he is around, he is always at mid-off, egging me and the others on."

Heroes knock out Blitz

PVL

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Calicut Heroes crushed Chennai Blitz 15-13, 15-13, 15-12 in their final league match of the Ru Pay-Prime Volleyball League at the Nehru Indoor Stadium here on Sunday.

Heroes thus topped the table with 12 points with a better set difference (13) and will now get an extra two points in the Super 5s beginning on Monday. Mumbai Meteors booked the final fifth spot in the Super 5.

Setter Mohan Ukkrapandian and attacker Jerome Vinith were the key players instrumental in knocking out Chennai, which failed miserably when it came to the crunch.

Calicut had players who delivered at the death. In the first set, it was skipper Jerome, and in the second it was Vikas Maan. Vikas' jump smash at 14-12 brooked no response.

Delhi Toofans beat Ahmedabad Defenders 15-11, 16-14, 15-11 to finish second in the league. Delhi will get one point in the Super 5s.

Teams qualified for Super 5s: 1. Calicut Heroes, 2. Delhi Toofans, 3. Ahmedabad Defenders, 4. Bengaluru Torpedoes, 5. Mumbai Meteors.

Parantap, Kruthik put Karnataka on top against Uttar Pradesh

Crucial: Parantap and Kruthik's unbroken partnership took the home side from 194 for five to 325. K. MURALI KUMAR

C.K. NAYUDU TROPHY

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka made a strong start to its Col. C.K. Nayudu (U-23) Trophy final against Uttar Pradesh, raking up 325 runs for the loss of five wickets on day one at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Sunday.

Middle-order bat Yashovardhan Parantap (84 batting, 111b, 12x4) was the star as he combined for an unbroken 131-run stand for the sixth wicket with Kruthik Krishna (58 batting, 103b, 5x4) after the home side was reduced to 194 for five.

Earlier, after choosing to bat, openers MacNeil H. Noronha (68, 135b, 5x4, 2x6) and Prakar Chaturvedi (33, 69b, 4x4) put on 68 runs before Noronha and K.V. Aneesh (43, 76b, 3x4) added 73.

But a middle-order collapse saw Karnataka lose three wickets for 21 runs, including that of captain R. Smaran, pegging the host back. Parantap and Kruthik, however, ensured that their side would begin day two on top.

The scores: Karnataka 325 for five in 90 overs (MacNeil H. Noronha 68, Prakar Chaturvedi 33, K.V. Aneesh 43, Yashovardhan Parantap 84 batting, Kruthik Krishna 58 batting) vs. Uttar Pradesh.

AFI's plans to excel in 2036 Olympics

M. R. Praveen Chandran
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI)'s brainstorming meeting to formulate a strategic plan for excelling in the 2036 Olympics identified core areas which needed attention and the necessity to create a friendly ecosystem for the athletes, coaches and other stakeholders.

The AFI has decided to streamline the calendar to ensure that the athletes will have enough domestic competitions so that they can peak at the right time before major competitions. The AFI will also see that the athletes get adequate foreign exposure.

Speaking to *The Hindu* after the conclusion of the five-day meeting, the AFI president Adille Sumariwala said there will be two point strategy starting with the junior programme – mainly the National Inter-district Junior Athletic Meet (NIDJAM) and the Elite programme.

The AFI has decided to decentralise the national camps after the Paris Olympics and at the same time will allow institutions like Railways, Army, Navy, Police and academies run by JSW and Reliance Foundation to conduct camps at their respective centres.

A fantastic weekend, says Verstappen

No starting trouble here: Verstappen backed up his Bahrain triumph with a win in Saudi. GETTY IMAGES

SAUDI ARABIAN GP

Associated Press
JEDDAH

Max Verstappen stayed firmly on course for another season of dominance in Formula One on Saturday by winning the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix.

Even after just two races, and despite turmoil at Red Bull, Verstappen seems in near-total control on the track as he aims for a fourth consecutive title this year.

"A fantastic weekend for the whole team and also for myself. I felt really good with the car," Verstappen said.

The Dutch driver won easily ahead of his teammate Sergio Perez. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc was third.

"It was a bit of a boring race because Red Bull was a bit too quick and behind we had a bit of a gap, but we took the maximum points we could today," Leclerc said.

Eighteen-year-old British driver Oliver Bearman was seventh for Ferrari in his first F1 race, one day after being called up as an emergency replacement for Carlos Sainz Jr., who needed an operation to treat appendicitis.

Oscar Piastri took fourth for McLaren, with Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso fifth and George Russell sixth for Mercedes. Behind Bearman in seventh, McLaren's Lando Norris held off Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton in a fight for eighth place. Nico Hulkenberg was 10th for Haas' first point in F1 since the Singapore GP in September.

Sehrawat, Kalkal book tickets; Ravi, Bajrang tumble out

WRESTLING

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

Promising wrestlers Asian champion Aman Sehrawat (57kg) and National champion Sujeet Kalkal (65kg) won their respective freestyle weight classes even as Tokyo Olympic silver medallist Ravi Dahiya and bronze medalist Bajrang Punia failed to make the Indian team in the selection trials held for the upcoming Asian championships and Asian Olympic Games qualifiers at Sonipat on Sunday.

Sehrawat, who earlier defeated Ravi 14-13 in a thrilling round robin contest, recorded a convincing 10-0 win over Udit for the top spot. Ravi also lost 10-8 to Udit.

Convincing win

Kalkal got past Rohit Kumar 10-0. Earlier, Rohit posted a convincing 9-1 victory over Bajrang, who managed to overcome Ravinder 3-3 via criteria.

Former Worlds silver medallist Deepak Punia (86kg) booked his place in the Olympic qualifiers.

As per the ad-hoc committee's guidelines, the winner of the trials in the Olympic weight categories will represent India in upcoming Olympic qualifiers including the Asian Olympic qualifier (April 19-21) and World Olympic qualifier (May 9-12).

The winners in non-Olympic weight categories and the second-placed wrestlers in Olympic weight categories at the trials will represent the country in the Asian championships (April 11-16) in Bishkek.

The squad: Men: Freestyle: Olympic weights: 57kg: 1. Aman Sehrawat, 2. Udit; **65kg:** 1. Sujeet Kalkal, 2. Rohit Kumar; **74kg:** 1. Jaideep, 2. Yash Tushir; **86kg:** 1. Deepak Punia, 2. Sandeep Singh; **97kg:** 1. Deepak Nehra, 2. Vicky; **125kg:** 1. Sumit Malik, 2. Anirudh.

Non-Olympic weights: 61kg: Aakash Dahiya; **70kg:** Abhimanyou; **79kg:** Parvinder; **92kg:** Vinay.

Greco Roman: Olympic weights: 60kg: 1. Sumeet, 2. Pravesh Kumar; **67kg:** 1. Ashu, 2. Vinayak Patil; **77kg:** 1. Vikash, 2. Sajjan; **87kg:** 1. Sunil Kumar, 2. Ajay; **97kg:** 1. Nitesh, 2. Narinder Cheema; **130kg:** 1. Naveen, 2. Mehar Singh.

Non-Olympic weights: 55kg: Arjun Halakurki; **63kg:** Umesh; **72kg:** Ankit Gulia; **82kg:** Rohit Dahiya.